



We Live With Dhamma Knowledge

Institute of Dhamma Education

Dhamma-Sahāya Sāsano Centre

Aungchanthar, Pyin-Oo-Lwin

Myanmar

A Collection of Dhamma Talks (II)

Venerable Sayādaw Dr Nandamālābhivaṃsa

Aggamahāganthavācakaṇḍita

Aggamahāṇḍita

- **Discriminating Good From Evil**
 - **Realising Nibbāna**
 - **Sallekha Sutta**

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Sabbadānaṃ dhammadānaṃ jināti
The Gift of Dhamma excels all gifts

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**Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato
Sammāsambuddhassa**

**Veneration to the Exalted One, the
Homage-Worthy, the Perfectly Self-
Enlightened.**

The Buddha is an Arahāt and he is worthy of the highest veneration. All beings including devas and brahmās venerate the Buddha because the Buddha is the Supreme One, who has extinguished all defilements, who has become perfectly self-enlightened through the realization of the Four Ariya Truths, and who is endowed with the six great qualities of glory, namely, Issariya (supremacy), Dhamma (knowledge of the path to Nibbāna), Yasa (fame and following), Siri (noble appearance), Kāma (power of accomplishment) and Payatta (diligent mindfulness).

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A Brief Biography of Dr. Nandamālābhivamsa

Ashin Nandamāla was born on 22nd March 1940 at the village of Nyaung-bin in Sint-ku, Mandalay, the Union of Myanmar. His parents were U San Hla and Daw Khin, who were pious Buddhists.

At the age of six, he was sent to the monastic school to learn the three R's (Elementary reading, writing and arithmetic) in the Myanmar language.

He was ordained a novice at the Sagaing Hills when he was ten years old. His preceptor was Sayādaw U Canda, wellknown as the "Sankin Sayādaw", the presiding monk of the prestigious "Vipassanā" monastery. He was given the ecclesiastical name of "Nandamāla".

Ashin Nandamāla started to learn the Pāli language and the basic Buddhist scriptures under the tutelage of his own elder brother, Sayādaw U Nārada.

Ashin Nandamāla is one of the founders of the Buddhist Teaching Centre, Mahā Subodhayon, in Sagaing, where about two hundred monks receive education in Buddhist philosophy and Buddhist literature. Ashin Nandamāla serves as a religious

worker to promote and propagate the Buddha's teaching, both in Myanmar and abroad. Since 2003 he has given Abhidhamma courses in Europe, and 2005 Abhidhamma courses to Malaysia and Singapore.

In 1995, Ashin Nandamāla was conferred the title of the Senior Lecturer, "Aggamahā gantha vācaka paṇḍita" by the Government of Myanmar and in 2000 the title "Aggamahā paṇḍita". He wrote his ph.D. - thesis about Jainism in Buddhist literature.

He is Rector of the Sītagū International Buddhist Academy (SIBA) in Sagaing and, after being a Visiting Professor at the International Theravāda Buddhist Missionary University (ITBMU) in Yangon since its opening in 1998, in 2005 he was appointed the Rector also of this University. In 2003 he founded "Dhammavijjālaya - Centre for Buddhist Studies (CBS)" in Sagaing, connected to Mahāsubodhayon monastery.

He established IDE, Institute of Dhamma Education, in Pyin Oo Lwin in 2013 and since then he has been holding courses for both local and overseas students and the response for his lectures in IDE has been overwhelming and many students have to be turned away.

Ashin Nandamāla is the author of the following books written in Myanmar, Pāli and English languages:

1. The Biography of the Master (1970)
2. The Life and Literature of Shwehintha Sayādaw (1979)
3. The 90 Years of Life of Daw Malayee (1975)
4. The Hundred Verses on the Life of the Master (1970)
5. The Hundred Verses on the Life of the Thera (1985)
6. The Exposition of True Meaning (Paramattha dīpanī) with Critical Introduction to the Text (Thesis for the degree of Master of Philosophy)
7. Buddhism and Vegetarianism (1990)
8. The Three Meritorious Actions in Buddhism (1992)
9. Mettā (1994)
10. The Fundamental Abhidhamma (including a chapter on the History of Abhidhamma) (1997)
11. A Study of Jainism according to Buddhist Literature (Thesis for the degree of Ph.D., 2001)
12. Patthann Myat Desana (Discourse on Paṭṭhāna, 2004)
13. The Dhamma mirror (2004)

Introduction

DISCRIMINATING GOOD FROM EVIL is from a series of talks given by Venerable Dr U Nandamālābhivamsa in Naarden, Netherlands, Germany, Malaysia and Singapore from 2005 to 2007.

Many people who have read *AKUSALA, THE NATURE OF POISON* have requested for the series of talk on *KUSALA*. However with the hope that **DISCRIMINATING GOOD FROM EVIL** will introduce readers to the outstanding characteristics of GOOD and EVIL, Sayadaw wants us to understand and realize that to cultivate and to overcome certain mental states in order to pass beyond the suffering found in *saṃsāra* is more important. For this we say *Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!* to a Malaysian *Sayalay* Vimalanani for her tireless effort in this compilation, and we also thank Austrian Armin Brugger for reviewing the talks. *Sayalay* Vimalanani has also translated **REALISING NIBBĀNA** from Burmese into English.

REALISING NIBBĀNA is important to all Buddhists. It is vitally important that we become familiar and try to penetrate into its meaning.

Sayadaw gradually explains in detail the meaning of Nibbāna starting with ***Nibbāna only when taṇhā ceases*** and culminating in ***How Nibbāna is realised*** together with a special explanation on *vipassanā* insight knowledge.

Sayadaw likes ***SALLEKHA SUTTA*** and wishes us to know the ways set by Buddha to eradicate one's bad manners; being considerate of others and therefore not hurting others. We are not to emulate others' wrong words, deeds or thoughts along with their unwholesome mental factors, but to learn ways of ***eradicating, avoiding, leading upwards and of extinguishing them***. Special thanks go to *Samanera Sekhananda* for transcribing the talk, and Mexican Ruty Bessoudo (who has eyes of greater discernment than I have) for jointly reviewing with me.

Sayadaw's skills are many. He has great expertise in *Abhidhamma* studies and this is reflected in this series of talks. Present day devotees who may be intimidated by the study of *Abhidhamma* will find Sayadaw's presentation quite approachable and can resonate with their practice in daily life.

In the name to certain readers who will have abundant benefits from this compilation, I profess special gratitude to Malaysian *Sayalay* Vimalanani for her immaculate transcription and translation, and Selangor Buddhist Vipassana Meditation Society

(Malaysia) for the book texting, book design, publishing and distribution of this booklet.

May these discourses serve as a great support for those who strive for realization along the Noble Way!

Sādhu ! Sādhu ! Sādhu !

With metta,
Pauline Chong

DISCRIMINATING GOOD FROM EVIL

Why you are here today — the person that you are — is through your good rebirth consciousness that produced your human birth in this life. This wholesome consciousness (*citta*) is the result of some wholesome kamma you did in a previous life which has now ripened. You must have carried out some meritorious actions, like offering (*dāna*), observing precepts (*sīla*) or practising meditation.

So in this life you have knowledge, health and a good situation in life to study and practise the Dhamma. Surely you can understand this although you are not able to check and see the circumstances in your previous life. However, it is not yet over and done with because you still have this life — that is, if you want to continue on the right track in the rounds of rebirth and death.

The first priority

First of all it is crucial to know what is good (*kusala*) and evil (*akusala*) and how to differentiate between them. Some people, even yogis, are not able to tell the difference.

The two are opposing Dhammas. *Kusala* has the characteristic of being blameless (*anavajja*) and it

produces a good and happy result.¹ In contrast, *akusala's* characteristic is with fault (*sāvajja*) and it has a bad and unhappy effect (*dukkha vipāka*). As ultimate realities, their characteristics never change. This is nature's law, not the Buddha's. Wholesomeness and unwholesomeness occur in anyone — not Buddhists alone — of whatever religion, ethnic group or nationality.

With an *akusala* mind we have self-indulgence for sensual pleasures. We are prone to lie, cheat or steal. With such a habitual mental state, we become evil. Then again with good qualities, the mind becomes beautiful. Because an ordinary person is usually overwhelmed by *akusala*, his *kusala* becomes weak and scarce.

So, as the unwholesome state is more popular within us, it is necessary to identify our mental states in daily life. Then we would know whether our mental actions are good or bad. To do this, knowledge and right view are needed: to check, and then to remove or to encourage.

Don't be mistaken

As a start some knowledge of *Abhidhamma* would be helpful to avoid getting confused or mistaken about which mental state is *kusala* and which is not. For example, when I visited Germany I was told that

¹ *Kusala anavajja sukha vipāka lakkhana.*

doubt (*vicikicchā*) is good. Because of it we search for the truth. However, its presence usually leaves us indecisive and unable to do anything.

Then in Myanmar some people say, "I've the *cetanā* (volition/motivation)," when they talk about their motivation to do something meritorious. But not all *cetanās* are good. Depending on the company it keeps, it just encourages whatever the other associated mental factors do — both good and bad.

Then, take joy (*pīti*). Some kinds of *pīti* are very important and wholesome. With good Dhamma it is a factor of enlightenment and it increases knowledge. *Kāma pīti* (sensuous joy) is not so good. Such a sensual enjoyment — watching videos, listening and dancing to pop music, for example — makes us forget everything, and if there is over-attachment, craving arises. Then we only want to have fun, and have no interest to meditate or attend *Abhidhamma* class. So when we are joyful about something, we should ask ourselves: "What's my joy about?"

In another case, say two hunters are shooting deer. One hits and kills his target. The other one misses. But he shows appreciation of his friend's skill in shooting, and congratulates him. This is not the appreciative joy of *muditā*. Not all joys are *muditā*. In this instance it is an unwholesome act.

Knowing such differences in mental states, we can check our mind in our daily activities to discriminate between good and bad ones.

Goodness needs effort

The Buddha's main teachings can be summed up briefly as this: to avoid evil and to do good.

However, being good requires some work and determination. That is why it is important to know the literal meaning of "*kusala*". It means the removing of evil,² while *akusala* is the negation of it.³

We should not count on the Buddha to remove the defilements from us. Like a doctor He can only give a prescription: "Practise this way to remove greed-hatred-delusion (*lobha-dosa-moha*)."⁴ The doctor cannot do anything if we do not take the medicine prescribed.

The Buddha gave us the four kinds of right effort (*sammappadhāna*) to cultivate good and remove evil:

- * The effort to prevent the arising of unarisen evil states.
- * The effort to remove evil states that have arisen.
- * The effort to develop unarisen wholesome states.

² *Kusala* = ku [evil] + sala [removal or eradication].

³ *Akusala* = a [opposite of] + kusala [meritorious, wholesome, moral].

* The effort to augment arisen wholesome states.

Yet we cannot directly remove what is unwholesome within us. Only *kusala* can expel *akusala*. This is like taking antibiotics to kill disease germs. Moreover, just abstaining from evil is not quite enough: it would be just like sleeping. For instance *adosa* is not just the absence of *dosa* or hatred. When you are fast asleep, there is also no hatred (as well as no greed or delusion), which is not the same as *adosa* or anti-hatred. When systematically developed *adosa* or anti-hatred, becomes loving-kindness or *metta*, which is not only opposite in nature to *dosa*, it can actually remove this mental defilement.

Likewise for *alobha* — usually translated as non-attachment — it is not just that greed or attachment is missing. Not only is *alobha* (anti-greed) free of this defilement (*kilesa*), it removes craving or greed. It is the cause of generosity.

It is the same for *amoha* (anti-delusion) which is not just the lack of delusion. *Amoha* is also known as *paññā* or knowledge. This mental phenomenon can expel delusion.

Thus special effort is needed to remove the darkness of *akusala*, not just by sleeping, eating or other activities. We need to actively cultivate *kusala* light to dispel *akusala* since light and

darkness cannot coexist. When light is there, darkness has to disappear. By studying we can remove ignorance. Knowledge is also light. If we have a small candle, we can remove a little bit of the blackness of *moha*. If we have a big lamp, more darkness is dispelled.

In our attack against *akusala*, we cultivate *kusala* kamma in our daily life. For example, we carry out wholesome actions, like offering *dāna*, to remove *lobha* and *dosa*. We maintain precepts (*sīla*) to control our verbal and physical actions. This helps in our avoidance of the 10 unwholesome actions⁴. With our mind we cultivate concentration (*samādhi*) to protect it from unwholesomeness. However, only knowledge (*paññā*) can remove it totally. So by regular practice of insight meditation (*vipassanā*), we build up knowledge (*amoha*) to remove delusion.

It is the same if we want to buy something. First we have to check out that item carefully. Watchfully focusing to check is concentration (*samādhi*). Knowledge (*paññā*) investigates to find

⁴ **Bodily misconduct:** • killing living beings (*pāṇātipātā*), • taking others' properties that are not given (*adinnādāna*), • sexual misconduct (*kāmesumicchācāra*). **Verbal misconduct:** • telling lies (*musā vāda*), • malicious talk or setting one against another (*pisuṇa vācā*), • harsh and abusive speech (*pharusāvācā*), • vain and unbeneficial talk (*samphappalāpa*). **Mental misconduct:** • covetousness (*abijjhā*), • ill-will (*byāpāda*), • wrong view (*micchā diṭṭhī*).

whether it is good or bad. Mindfulness (*sati*) takes note of the article with the help of effort (*vīriya*). Thinking about it is right thought (*sammā saṅkappa*). Understanding the situation is right view (*sammā diṭṭhi*). It is beneficial if we use these factors to distinguish the characteristics of good and evil within us. Some mental states we have to overcome, others to cultivate.

For instance as a yogi, if you know how sensual desire (*kāmacchanda*) arises in you, you avoid that situation. If you know how it can be removed through certain conditions, then you should follow those conditions. The importance is to realise when *kāmacchanda* exists and when it does not, and to know how to remove it. Follow what should be followed, and avoid what should be avoided.

This way we increase *kusala* power to weaken *akusala*, and then finally remove it totally. That would be as an *Arahant* (Holy One). In the meantime, the effort must be unrelenting. For those who are immature, it would take time. For the lazy ones, it would be quite hopeless — until they buck up.

What keeps man and animal apart?

If you came across dog excrement while walking on the road, wouldn't you avoid it, disliking the smell? Nobody would want to step on or touch excreta. Likewise, you would never touch a naked flame with

your hand because you know the result. If you can feel this way towards evil, would you commit *akusala*?

Such attitudes are moral shame (*hiri*) and fear (*ottappa*). *Hiri* is disgust with anything evil, avoiding it as dirty or shameful. *Ottappa* is fear of evil, dreading its effects. Though they have different aspects, they are always associated as they share the same object — that of avoiding wrongdoing.

With *hiri* you think, "I'm educated... I'm well brought up... I've a good family background and reputation... I'm a good, responsible parent (monk/nun/teacher/student). So I shouldn't do this kind of misconduct." You consider and respect your own status, qualities or qualifications.

Other types of shame need not be *hiri*. You might feel shy to speak in public. It is but hesitation and unwillingness associated with different feelings. It has nothing to do with *akusala*.

With *ottappa*, fearing the bad consequences, you consider your circumstances and other people: "I've good friends and am a student of good teachers. If I do something wrong, it will reflect badly on them.... How will my parents or children feel? What would the neighbours or my colleagues say?" So, you refrain from wrongdoing out of respect for the others and the community.

In Myanmar there was a monk who had the habit of going fishing. When a Minister came on a visit, he hid himself. (He did not want to be seen misbehaving as a monk.) When the others complained about his behaviour, the Minister replied, "But he has *hiri-ottappa* or else he would not have hidden himself. Therefore I pay respect to him."

Protection from being eaten by ogres

According to the Buddha, *hiri-ottappa* purifies the mind⁵. They are also called *deva* dhammas — the dhammas of deities or *arahants* — because they enable us to lead the life of deities by purifying our temperament.

No ogre can disturb or eat up anyone who knows about *deva* dhammas, by order of their king *Yakkarāja*. The others however are not spared. One of the *Jātaka* stories⁶ tells of three brother princes who retired to live in the forest. The eldest was the *Bodhisatta* Himself. He was the only one of the three who knew about *hiri-ottappa*. When the ogres questioned them, "What are *deva* dhammas?"

The youngest prince replied, "They are the sun and the moon."

"The *deva* dhammas are the four directions," said the middle one.

However, because of the *Bodhisatta*, the ogres

⁵ *Sukka* dhamma.

⁶ *Devadhamma Jātakas*.

spared their lives and did not eat them up. Just like the two younger princes, not all people know about *deva* dhammas. "I never care what the others say. I do as I please." This is a very dangerous attitude. Such a person has no respect for himself (or herself), his own qualities or dignity. Without restraint, he becomes shameless and fearless in doing evil.

No evil possible without *ahirika-anottappa*

Without shamelessness (*ahirika*) and fearlessness (*anottappa*), no *akusala* can arise. (However, not all kinds of shamelessness are *ahirika*.) These two mental states are associated with all unwholesome *cittas*. Thus a person in anger becomes unashamed and fearless to say anything, using abusive language. You might feel ashamed to hear people quarrelling, shouting bad words in public. But they are not ashamed. Without *hiri-ottappa* when *lobha* arises, we dare to steal. Whatever we wish for we do, regardless of others or consequences. There is no inhibition of evil actions through the body, speech or mind, much like a pig which does not feel disgust about excrement.

In this manner without *hiri-ottappa* (moral shame and moral fear), we are like animals without *sīla*. So whoever refrains from evil conduct has *hiri-ottappa*, whoever doesn't has none. According to the Buddha, moral shame and moral fear are guardians of the human world (*loka pala*) — as protectors of human

dignity — so long as they are within us. Without them, we cannot be differentiated from animals.

“Who sees the Dhamma sees me.”

When I was a young novice, everything was in the books, not in the mind. Since 12 years of age, I had been studying *Abhidhamma*. All the *cittas* and *cetasikas* were just to be learnt. All the 89 types of consciousness in Chapter One of *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha* did not really concern me. Now I see that everything that is explained concerns our lives, and that the *Abhidhamma* is actually within us. So, understanding is very important in Buddhism. The Buddha never expects us to just have faith in the Dhamma.

“One who sees the Dhamma sees me.” I did not know its deep meaning when I was young. On seeing the Buddha statue, it was just a person to me then. It brought me no benefit. The Buddha appeared in the world for our welfare and to teach what is true. If we do not know or realise this, then the Buddha is useless to us. During His lifetime many had met Him several times without gaining any knowledge. On the other hand others realised the Dhamma after seeing Him and listening to His discourse.

*Saddhā*⁷ (faith) based on seeing the Dhamma is very

⁷ Usually translated as faith, belief or confidence.

important in contrast to blind faith. This is shown in the case of *Vakkali*. His *saddhā* led to craving to see the Buddha all the time. The Buddha then had to tell him, "What is the use of seeing my wretched body? Who sees the Dhamma sees me. If one doesn't see the Dhamma, one doesn't see me.'

Blind faith can be dangerous

Faith with or without knowledge: it makes a difference. I have never seen durian trees until now. So now I know how tall they are and how these various types of trees bear fruit. If someone were to ask me about durian trees, I can explain. I have the experience. I need no longer have to depend on other people's information about them.

In the same way, *saddhā* arises in a yogi who realises, for example, mind-and-matter while meditating. With his own experience, he does not have to rely on what others say anymore. "Seeing is believing" so to speak.

However, for many people, believing in what others say has to be a starting point. If they were to have the knowledge, they would not have to put their faith in the others.

Why is a worldly person called a *puthujjana*⁸?
Like practically all ordinary people, he produces a lot

⁸ *Puthujjana* = putho [many, majority] + jjana [cause to arise (many mental defilements); or gurus].

of mental defilements and has to have many gurus. Because his knowledge is not enough, he has to seek the guidance of many spiritual guides, unlike the *Sotāpanna* who has only one teacher, the Buddha.

If I tell you about a machine that can fly with many people seated inside with their luggage stored in a compartment, you need not believe me. You know already about aeroplanes. If someone came back from the United States and talks about it, you believe his account because you have not been there. A *puthujjana* is like that. His faith is not reliable. He can be converted to other religions, acquiring all kinds of views.

Just believing can be dangerous.

Without knowledge *saddhā* becomes blind faith. It becomes overwhelming without the control of knowledge. By itself it can never work. A person who has a lot of *saddhā* and little knowledge will take interest in useless things.⁹ He believes in what is not credible. For instance, some people's belief in the Buddha is meaningless. With excessive faith, some think that the Buddha is still alive as God somewhere in heaven or pure land. They believe that He is still omnipresent, ready to help when they are in trouble and pray to Him. This kind of thinking is due to *mudhā*, that is, it is unmeaningful or

⁹ *Balavā saddho, manda pañño. Mudhappa sanno hoti.*

without reason. Uncontrolled by knowledge, great *saddhā* can lead to craving, as in the case of Venerable *Vakkali* who wanted to be near the Buddha all the time.

This one-sided faith can also lead to unreasonable and illogical states of mind. A devotee in this way might accept that everything monks say is correct. This attitude can also lead to wrong belief in the rites and ceremonies of other religious practices. With *paññā* in balance, *saddhā* does not become blind faith as it is based on knowledge. Based on seeing the Dhamma, it leads to a good result.

The *Sotāpanna*'s confidence

Saddha-paññā in balance leads to absolute confidence in the Buddha and His enlightenment if you become a *Sotāpanna*. In *Sotāpatti magga* (path of Stream-Enterer) doubt about the Triple Gem and wrong view is removed. Your *saddhā* with knowledge (*aveccappasāda*) never changes and cannot be removed by anyone, not even *Māra*.

There was a lay devotee who invited the Buddha to his house. After listening to the Dhamma discourse, he became a *Sotāpanna*. Afterwards, *Māra* visited him, disguised in the Buddha's form, to try to "convert" him. He said,

"Oh, householder, just now I spoke wrongly. What I mentioned as '*aniccā*' is really '*niccā*'. And I meant to say '*sukhā*', not '*dukkhā*' ", and so on.

The devotee knew at once that the person was not the Buddha and demanded to know his identity. *Māra* then admitted who he was. Then the devotee said, "Thousands can talk to convert me, but it would be impossible."

Even in the next life this kind of *saddhā* cannot be changed.

At the end of the day is *saddhā* necessary?

It works both ways: without *saddhā* to control it, *paññā* can be a cause of cunningness. We do not believe this or that. It becomes an incurable state. We can study more and more Dhamma and *Abhidhamma*, yet the *saddhā* gets less and less. With weak confidence, we cannot cultivate *kusala*.

Yet the Buddha excluded *saddhā* in the Noble Eightfold Path. Knowledge or *sammā ditṭhi* is more important.

On the way to becoming a *Sotāpanna*, confidence is decisive. You believe in kamma and its result at this level. So *saddhā* is necessary. Because of it you want to study the Dhamma or to meditate. As a start without knowledge, you just believe in Buddhism. You go to the Triple Gem in trust. Without confidence, nobody will go to the Buddha, Dhamma and the *Sangha*. At this stage *saddhā* is crucial.

Only at a higher level you believe in the Buddha's

enlightenment. Many *suttas* refer to this second level only as it is more important for realising *Nibbāna*. That is to say, it leads to *Nibbāna* whereas the lower level cannot.

Do *Arahants* need *saddhā*?

On one occasion the Buddha asked Venerable *Sāriputta*, "*Sāriputta*, do you believe me when I say that there is such a concentration without *vitakka* and *vicāra*¹⁰?"

The Venerable replied, "I don't have to believe you, Venerable Sir. I know it already by myself."

In his case faith is no longer a decisive condition. Knowledge is more important. An *Arahant* does not have to believe in others, having acquired the knowledge himself.

Is belief in God *saddhā*?

If I say to you that I hold a precious gem in my fist – actually there is nothing there – you may believe me. According to *Abhidhamma*, your belief is not *saddhā*.

In my fist I am holding a piece of paper. Another person believes me when I tell him so. I can show it: it is an actual thing. This is *saddhā*: it deals with what is real.

¹⁰ *Jhāna* factors of initial application and sustained application.

A pool of pure water

All Buddhists are quite familiar with "*saddhā*". However, we need to define it because of the wide range of its meaning. To know the meaning and definition of any term is important. Literally "*saddhā*" means to bear well the object¹¹, that is, the virtues of the Triple Gem and the cause-and-effect of kamma.

In a pool of pure water, the image of trees, clouds and the sky shows up clearly, unlike in dirty water. *Saddhā* is like that with its clear and clean state of mind in contrast to the impure mind. Then there is absence of desire for sensual pleasures and of the other hindrances of hate, worry, doubt, sloth and torpor. Like the water-purifying ruby of *Cakkavatti*, the Universal Monarch, it purifies our mental states by discarding *akusala*. *Saddhā* acts like a hand. With a pile of treasure in front of you, but without a hand, can you pick it up?

"Faith" or "confidence" as a single term cannot cover all aspects of its meaning in Pāli. In brief, of its four aspects, "faith" is only one part. The others are purification of the mind, enthusiasm to do good, and the determination to carry it out.

The Buddha Himself defined *saddhā* as the confidence one has in His enlightenment. We can

¹¹ *Saddhā* = sa [good] + ddhā(heti) [well-placed or established (mind onto object)].

see that with this definition, *saddhā* is not the faith or confidence meant when we say, "I believe you," or "I believe in God.

The faith of non-Buddhists

Following the definition of Buddhist *saddhā*, then non-Buddhists have no *saddhā* since they have lack confidence in the Triple Gem. On the other hand, they have belief in their respective Gods, teachers and doctrines. Can this belief be *saddhā*?

Nobody has actually experienced that God created the world and all the things and beings in it. Can anybody find out the truth? It is like the case of my empty fist and my claim that it holds a precious gem. Yet if one still believes that there is indeed a God, then this belief is without the wisdom (*paññā*) as defined in *Abhidhamma*. This kind of blind faith is only wrong view (*micchā diṭṭhi*) associated with rites and rituals. Someone with knowledge would not accept this belief blindly. According to *Abhidhamma*, *saddhā* only regards *kusala* and not *akusala*.

We should also consider what the Buddha Himself has to say. He retold the occasion He met *Ālāra Kālāma*. At that time the Buddha asked, "What is your teaching and your attainments?" *Ālāra Kālāma* explained his technique of concentration or *samatha* and his attainment of the third *arūpa jhāna* (immaterial sphere absorption). The *Bodhisatta* then thought to Himself, "Not only does *Ālāra*

Kālāma have *saddhā*, I also have *saddhā*." He accepted that believers of other religions had confidence in their respective teachers¹². He never liked controversy, preferring harmony in the first place.

In my opinion belief in all kinds of views can be called "*saddhā*". The difference with Buddhist *saddhā* is that it is under the control of or kept in check by *paññā*. In a *sutta*, a disbeliever told the Buddha that he also had *saddhā*. The Buddha then asked him, "What is your goal?"

Some say that when you die, you go to either hell or heaven and meet God there. How to prove this? The Buddha's way is to come and see for yourself. He never pointed out a cause-and-condition which cannot be approached by human knowledge. The Buddha gives the way:

"Come and see. Practise for yourself and you will experience (*sandiṭṭhika*). If you try, you can succeed. If you practise *vipassanā* successfully, you will surely find out about impermanence-unsatisfactoriness-non-self-nature (*anicca-dukkha-anatta*)."

The Buddha never rejected other believers' *saddhā*. Yet despite their confidence, the result is quite

¹² *Cūḷasihanāda Sutta of Majjhima Nikāya*.

different. Without knowledge, *saddhā* cannot work and we cannot find what is true.

This is like consulting a doctor for our disease. Believing in him, we take his medicine, not knowing what it is, being without medical knowledge. If we know something about medicinal drugs and their properties, there is no need to have faith in that doctor. We already know which medicine is suitable and effective.

***Chanda* makes the impossible possible**

Ten months before the Buddha's *parinibbāna*, He was stricken with a deadly disease. Only three months earlier He had given up the decision to live. An ordinary person would have died from that incurable disease within a few days.

Instead of ordinary medicine the Buddha used mental power of *chanda* (the wish to do) along with *vīriya* (effort), *citta* (consciousness) and *vīmaṃsa* (investigation) to protect Himself. These *iddhipāda* or means of accomplishment sustained His life through mental power. In a few days He recovered. It was not because He wanted to live longer: among other reasons, He had yet to meet His last disciple *Subhadda* to explain the Dhamma to him. The Buddha had gauged that only in 10 months' time would he be matured enough to understand.

So for the meantime the disease was dispelled

through the power of *iddhipāda*.

Nearing the time of His *parinibbāna*, walking from *Pāvā* to *Kusinārā* — not so far a distance — the Buddha had to stop and rest in 25 places. He was then very tired and sick with dysentery. On reaching *Kusinārā* the Buddha had to lie down on a bed prepared between two *sa*/trees.

On meeting the Buddha, *Subhadda* became a monk and meditated even before the Buddha passed into *parinibbāna*. That night *Subhadda* became an *Arahant*.

To live for that day the Buddha had sustained His life using *chanda*. So *chanda* makes the impossible possible.

According to *Ledi Sayadaw*, there are two kinds of *chanda*. The Buddha's *chanda* is the one that only wants to accomplish a task.¹³ It covers every action: for example, in wanting to talk, look, drink or think. By merely wishing to do something, it is without clinging or attachment. In our case we could wish to meditate, attend Dhamma class or to do *dāna*. We could look for drinking water to offer the others.

It is unlike the second type of *chanda* dominated by

¹³ *Kattukamyatā chanda* = the *chanda* that only wants to do.

taṇhā or *lobha*. "I want to eat my favourite snack, and then go shopping," is different from "I want to meditate." For worldly people or *puthujjanas*, their *chanda* is usually the second type which is mixed with greed.

Mistaking *lobha* for *chanda*

As the two seem similar in nature (in wishing to do), we can be confused. We have to understand them and know the difference. *Lobha* is attachment, sticking to the object while *chanda* has no sticky nature. It is usual to have hopes and desires in which *lobha* and *chanda* are mixed, rising together. When *chanda* associates with *lobha*, it follows *lobha*. Then *lobha* leads, being the dominant factor, among the associated mental factors. This is the case for most of us.

For instance some yogis while meditating get a *nimitta* (a sign of concentration such as lights and so on). As a result they become attached to it, wanting it to appear again and again. Though originally they had wholesome *chanda* in wanting to meditate, it is now unwholesome *chanda*. *Taṇhā* has become associated with their wish by dominating it. *Chanda* has thus followed their craving.

Is *chanda* stronger than greed?

Which is more powerful: *lobha* or *chanda*? For most people if *lobha* is stronger, that is okay. However

someone extremely wealthy like the *Bodhisatta Sumedha* (in the *Jātaka* stories) could abandon all despite his *lobha*. His *chanda* was more powerful than his *lobha*.

You have a business to run. Yet you take leave to come and study the Dhamma here. This shows that the *chanda* to study Dhamma is stronger than *lobha*. The Dhamma is not an object of sensual enjoyment.

To have money versus to have knowledge: the two are different. Which is better? [Both!] According to *Ledi Sayadaw* if both *lobha* and *chanda* are equally strong or if *lobha* is stronger, then you will not be able to abandon wealth, power and worldly pleasures to practise meditation.

In ancient Myanmar one king had a minister with great Dhamma knowledge. Near death this minister gave instructions that when he died he was to be put in the coffin with his hands outside. This was to show people that "Nothing I take away. Everything I leave behind. With empty hands I go."

For those who know the Dhamma, *chanda* is stronger and more vigorous. At a powerful level it can eradicate *lobha-taṇhā*. Some can therefore renounce all their fortune and position to ordain and meditate, like the Bodhisatta who abandoned a prince's life. Then finally under the Bodhi tree He

resolved, "As long as I remain unenlightened, I will not move from my seat."

That is through this powerful *chandadhipāti*.¹⁴ If *taṇhā* was stronger than *chanda*, nobody would be able to renounce or to attain *Nibbāna*.

It matters what you wish for

It is important to make an aspiration before (and after) carrying out any meritorious act. Otherwise the effect will not be determined.

There is a big difference between practising Buddhists and medical students. The Buddhists' aim is to end suffering. So we study about matter, and do insight meditation to make sure that we are able to see that there is no permanent entity inside us. Medical students study anatomy so that they know how to treat the various parts as doctors. They cannot be *Arahants* though they know more about the body than us.

In Sri Lanka there was a *mahāthera* with a good knowledge of the Dhamma. At one time when the King came to pay homage to him, he was suffering from a bad belly pain. The King could hear his groans from outside and said, "He can't bear to suffer. So he can't be an *arahant*." Then he left.

¹⁴ *Chanda* that dominates the associated mental states.

The *thera's* pupils came and told him, "You make us ashamed."

Their teacher replied, "I wanted to meet the *Metteyya* Buddha. I could have become an *Arahant* any time I wanted to."

Then he instructed the young monks, "Leave the room for a while."

By the time they came back, the *thera* had already attained *Arahantship* — all because he had changed his wish or intention.

Some people in Myanmar also aspire to meet the future Buddha; so they would be very sad if they were to become an enlightened being (*ariya*). For those who wish to become a future Buddha, they cannot become a *Sotāpanna* in this life. An example in *Sagaing* would be *Taungphilar Sayadaw* who mentioned in a book: "In the Himalaya Mountains near the *Mañjūsaka* tree there is a cave. After the Buddha *Sāsana* (Buddha's Dispensation) is over, may I be reborn there to serve the *Pacceka* Buddhas or Silent Buddhas. Also may I receive from *Metteyya* Buddha the prophecy that I would be a future Buddha."

So your aspiration matters a lot. You need to have an objective: "Through this practice, may I attain *magga-phala* or path-fruitition." If not, you won't.

You cannot accidentally become a *Sotāpanna* because you need to aim and work for it. But if you want only happiness from meditation, you will only get happiness, not *Nibbāna*.

There is a scale to measure the various aspirations: those who work for *Nibbāna* are at a high level. Those who wish to be the future Buddha's attendants or to become a *Pacceka* Buddha are at the intermediate level. Then people who wish for success and so on are at the lower level.

All those who were enlightened during the Buddha's lifetime had made their wish in previous lives. Such a wish for detachment and liberation is not with craving but is simply the *chanda* that makes the impossible possible.

Right view positive

It is not because we are Buddhists that we have right view (*sammā diṭṭhi*). It is because of our views that make us Buddhists.

As long as there are humans, there will always be different ideas and views that set one another apart. This is because of the difference in background, culture and religion. It is clear that the influence of view is strong and prevails everywhere.

According to *Ledi Sayadaw*, wrong view (*diṭṭhi*)

arises in those who think in many ways. Not able to realise the true nature of Dhammas, people search for the cause, for example, of their existence. Such people usually look to untrue causes that lead to belief in other religions, cults, astrology, and so on. They have also come up with all kinds of theories such as creationism and Darwinism.¹⁵

There are those who think that animal sacrifice to God is meritorious, or that it is okay to kill animals for food. Others in contrast think that all forms of killing are *akusala*.

Then, in the West some people see nothing wrong with promiscuity, unlike Buddhists who try to abstain from sexual misconduct (*kāmesumicchācāra*). Also, certain people believe that taking others' property is not stealing, thinking that it is their right. Their view is in line with the *Brahmin* text which tells them that it is no crime to do so because they are the sons of God. Thus as everything is created by Brahma, their Father, all are their property.

What makes a view wrong

Diṭṭhi is just view or vision¹⁶. The only difference is that knowledge views the Dhamma correctly as

¹⁵ In the Creation theory, God created the world and its beings out of nothing. Darwinism puts forward the theory that man originated from monkeys.

¹⁶ *Dassanam diṭṭhi*.

sammā diṭṭhi, while *diṭṭhi* does it wrongly as *miccha diṭṭhi*.

What makes it wrong? Any belief that is opposite of, not according to, or without the Dhamma can be called a wrong view. Its faulty interpretation is like the view of a crazed person. Thus it cannot be reasonable. There are so many kinds of wrong view. In those days in India, there were over 60 of them. I cannot explain them all in a lecture. If you want to know, read *Brahmajāla Sutta* of *Dīgha Nikāya* or *Diṭṭhi Saṃyutta* about them.

So it is in the way we see things. The Buddha said that of all the *akusalas*, the most serious is seeing wrongly. Why is it so? Depending on view, action follows. If it is wrong view, wrong action is carried out, which is *akusala kamma*.

That is why the Buddha's teaching of "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhārā* (volitional actions arise depending on ignorance)" is so meaningful. We think what is bad as good, and what is good as bad. Not knowing what should or should not be done, we act according to our wish and notion, generating good and bad kamma. These in turn generate further rebirths in *saṃsāra* (rounds of rebirth).

In teaching us the Noble Eightfold Path, the Buddha points to right understanding or *sammā diṭṭhi* first. It has to be present not only at the beginning, but at

the middle and the end. Without it nothing would be possible, given our defiled and perverted views (*diṭṭhi vipallāsa*).

Common to have wrong view

It is very hard to avoid *miccha diṭṭhi* (wrong view). If we were to believe in certain rites and ceremonies; or if we assume our action is wholesome though in reality it is not, then we have wrong view. Let's say we keep silent in spite of ill-treatment though we are upset and angry inside. We think we have patience or *khanti* but that is also wrong view. Then if we think that our sadness is *karuṇā* or compassion on seeing people in suffering — that is also *diṭṭhi*. All these lead to a bad situation.

At the extreme level, a strong *diṭṭhi*-holder clings on to his view even with the Buddha's explanation. One day *Saccaka* son of *Nigaṇṭha* came to engage the Buddha in a debate about attā¹⁷ and was defeated. Yet the Buddha explained to him the right way to practise although he knew that *Saccaka* in this life could not be converted, holding so strongly to his view. However listening very carefully is a condition for the future, even two or three lives hence. According to Commentary, much later in Ceylon a certain *Kalla Buddharakkhita* who became an Arahant was this *Saccaka*.

¹⁷ *Cūlasaccaka Sutta* and *Mahāsaccaka Sutta*, *Majjhima Nikāya*.

Even among meditators, there are different kinds and levels of wrong view. Some yogis, especially those without much knowledge, with a pure and concentrated mind see brilliant rays emanating from the body. They think that they have achieved *magga-phala*, path-fruit. This is a subtle form of *diṭṭhi*.

Monks too can hold wrong view. That is why any newcomer from another faith had to undergo probation for four months before ordination. This was to check whether he still kept to his old views. However, those who held the view that kamma exists could be ordained at once.

The three most important wrong views

If you hold any of the following views, you cannot qualify to be called a Buddhist.

- *Natthika diṭṭhi*: view of the non-existence of effect. If you perform a *kusala* (or *akusala*) action, such as offering *dāna* (or killing someone), there is no effect.
- *Akiriya diṭṭhi*: view that good and evil do not exist. Therefore their effects also do not exist. In other words there is no such thing as meritorious or unmeritorious deeds.
- *Ahetuka diṭṭhi*: view of causelessness. "*Natthi hetu, natthi paccayo*." Cause and condition do not exist. To be the Buddha's disciples we must be free of such views. We must have such views instead:

- *Atthika vāda*: the effects of good and evil actions exist.
- *Kiriya vāda*: good should be done; evil should not be done.
- *Hetu vāda*: there is cause and effect.

Becoming right view positive

First we start with cause and effect. If we accept that we have our own kamma with its result, and that kamma is our own and only property, we have a basic level of *sammā diṭṭhi*. We are responsible for whatever we do. At this level of understanding, wrong view still remains as we are not yet true Buddhists.

Then if we accept and realise — through *vipassanā* practice — that we are only mind and matter and not a permanent entity; and that dependent on cause, effect arises¹⁸, then our view becomes purified. These two kinds of knowledge form the foundation of *vipassanā*. Further, in realising the rise and fall of mind and matter, we then gain *vipassanā's sammā diṭṭhi*. We have reached the mid-level of understanding. We are on our way to becoming a true Buddhist, though a temporary one, with no doubts about the Dhamma — so that we do not think that God created us.

It is only when all wrong views and confusion are

¹⁸ Analytical knowledge of mind and matter (*nāmarūpa pariccheda ñāṇa*) and knowledge of causality (*paccaya pariggaha ñāṇa*).

removed that we have permanent *sammā diṭṭhi*. That is on becoming a *Sotāpanna*, the true Buddhist who never changes his or her position. As a noble person we know that there is no soul or permanent entity, only phenomena working together in cause-and-effect.

In the meanwhile, so long as we are not *Sotāpanna*, wrong view will still remain: that is, we are wrong view positive, like HIV positive. With HIV in two, five or ten years we can get full-blown AIDS. We are never afraid of wrong view, only of being HIV positive. Yet wrong view positive means we are bound to the whole of *samsāra*. Being HIV positive is only for this life.

Can I have your [wise] attention?

In the plane after take-off the steward announces to the passengers, "May I have your attention please?"

This attention is so important. Without it we do not get to see, hear or know a phenomenon because we are thinking of something else. In attending class, if your mind keeps running back home, you will miss much of the lecture. That is why the Buddha would usually remind listeners before a discourse, "Listen carefully and pay attention."

Manasikāra, usually translated as "attention", literally means "making or keeping [the object] in

the mind” or “doing [an action] in the mind¹⁹”. Because of it, the object can be kept in the mind.²⁰ That is attention’s basic function.

Manasikāra also can make a different mind arise, that is, it makes the following mind different from the preceding one²¹.

A gatekeeper

In this way by allowing objects to enter the mind, attention acts like the mind’s gatekeeper. Because of it, thought is produced when we see or remember something, for instance, when you think of home or recall yesterday’s class.

Attention can be wise (*yoniso manasikāra*) or improper (*ayoniso manasikāra*). If you have a useless gatekeeper, he will allow all sorts of bad characters to enter your compound. In the same way *ayoniso manasikāra* allows you to have akusala thought: to steal someone’s property, for instance. With proper attention you have the thought that stealing is wrong. With it, *kusala* arises in you, for

¹⁹ *Manasikāra* = manasi [in mind, consciousness] + kāra [making].

²⁰ *Ārammaṇa paṭipādaka manasikā*: this universal cetasika directs the mind to the object.

²¹ *Vīthi paṭipādaka manasikāra*: This is another name for the five sense-door attending consciousness (*pañcadvārāvajjana citta*) which starts the thought process for example when we see something. In the mind-door process, the mind-door attending consciousness (*manodvārāvajjana citta*) causes *jāvanas* or energetic thought to arise. Thus it is called *javana paṭipādaka manasikāra*.

example, in thinking to meditate. To contemplate on impermanence — that all conditioned things are thus — is wise attention. Likewise if you see what is suffering as suffering or *dukkha*, and non-self as non-self or *anatta*.

Unwise attention sees the opposite: what is impermanent as permanent, non-self as self, and *dukkha* as *sukha*. If you think, "Since birth my mind has remained and will remain up to my death." Unable to see the rise and fall of mind states, you think it is permanent. This is *ayoniso manasikāra*.

So attention is very important in thought. All types of *kusala* and *akusala* thought arise based on it.

More than a mere gatekeeper

Manasikāra (as the attending consciousness) attends to whatever object that enters a sense-door. The way it turns to the object leads to either a wholesome or unwholesome energetic mind.

Hence thought always comes first. Without it nobody talks or acts. Whether that thought is good or bad depends on an earlier intention. Human nature is such that on seeing something desirable, enjoyment arises without any consideration about *kusala* or *akusala*. Like animals: when they see food, they run and grab it. If others are there as well, they fight. They have no idea to share or offer.

Because of habit, *manasikāra* leads to either a

wholesome or unwholesome energetic mind (*javanas*). If you are short-tempered, you have the tendency to get irritated or flare up easily with whatever that displeases you with *dosa javanas*. For those greedy people, *lobha javanas* often arise. Then with people who are easily confused or doubtful, *moha javanas* appear readily. So through earlier conditions, the type of energetic mind is predictable — like the fruit of a tree.

With resolution and by force of habit we can influence the type of *javanas* we have. As a start we should try to cultivate good intentions. We can condition ourselves through practice, learning the Dhamma and associating with the wise to get their advice. Sometimes determination alone is not enough. We need to incline the mind to wholesomeness with proper attention and constant practice. For instance, on seeing someone we think, "May he or she be well, happy and peaceful." This is wise attention.

This sort of *manasikāra* is led by *paññā* or knowledge in unity with *sañ* or mindfulness and *vīriya* or effort. That is why it is called wise or proper attention. It occurs in the practice of *samatha* and *vipassanā* too, covering all types of insight knowledge, even up to the highest. This is a very wide field. Accordingly, wise attention is one of the four factors that leads us to become noble

persons.²²

Not only that, according to *Abhidhammic* scholar *Ledi Sayadaw*, *manasikāra* can become very powerful, like a big elephant with enormous strength. Then it can do everything. Even Nibbāna so subtle and hard to grasp, yet *manasikāra* can pay attention to it. *Manasikāra* can even perceive all objects as the preceding mind before the Buddha's omniscience or *sabbaññutā ñāṇa*.

Do thieves have *sati*?

Without mindfulness nobody can attain enlightenment. All the Buddhas who appeared in this world walked this path, being the only way to liberation. All of them taught *sati* to Their disciples. Gautama Buddha too in His teachings encourages us to follow this practice of mindfulness, in the same way a parent would urge us to do something good for our own benefit. Doing so, it would help us overcome life's problems which cause sorrow, lamentation, pain and grief. It would purify us of mental defilements and help us find the path to *Nibbāna*.

Never in excess and always needed

Why the Buddha said that it is greatly beneficial to develop *sati* is clear when we examine its nature and its functions.

²² The other three factors are associating with noble persons, listening to the Dhamma and Dhamma practice.

Sati is a mental state which makes the mind remember or take heed of an object to know it clearly. Otherwise the mind just drifts away as if on water to other objects. Mindfulness sinks into the object like a stone put in water. It makes the mind steady with the object.

As one of the seven factors of enlightenment²³, its work is to balance the other mental states which are grouped in two: the active group (*dhammavicaya* or investigating, *pīti* or joy and *vīriya* or effort) versus the quiet group (*passaddhi* or tranquility, *samādhī* or concentration and *upekkhā* or equanimity).

Mindfulness is needed all the time, given the circumstances: whether the place, our health, the weather, food and companions are suitable. Different conditions suit different people. When the situation changes, so do our attitudes and mental states. Thus we need a regulator like *sati*. It does not mean that we have to develop all the factors in one go. Depending on conditions, if the mind is very active, we need to neglect the active group and develop the quiet group. When the mind is sluggish, then we build up the active group.

Sati also balances the five faculties or *indriyas*.

²³ The seven *sambojjhaṅgas*: *sati* (mindfulness), *dhammavicaya* (investigating of the Dhamma), *vīriya* (effort), *pīti* (joy), *passaddhi* (tranquility), *samādhī* (concentration) and *upekkhā* (equanimity).

Unlike the others, it is never excessive and is always necessary like salt in food. It keeps *saddhā* or faith and *paññā* or wisdom in balance. If the latter is weak, we might have blind faith. When *saddhā* is weak, we neglect doing good deeds. *Sati* also balances *vīriya* and *samādhi*. With weak *samādhi* and excess *vīriya*, a restless mind arises. If effort is too little, sleepiness develops. It is like playing a guitar where the strings should be not too taut or too slack. Such knowledge is necessary for yogis as the way to *Nibbāna* is not easy and straightforward like the road to the airport.

Mindfulness also works like a doorman who keeps out unwanted visitors. Acting together with ardent effort (*ātāpi*) and clear comprehension (*sampajañña*), it keeps out unwholesome states like *lobha* and *dosa*. Thus as part of the Noble Eightfold Path, *sati* acts to purify us.

The approximate cause of mindfulness is a firm perception or *saññā*. Without it no mindfulness is possible.

***Sati* recalls the past**

So far we have only been dealing with the present (object). *Sati* is actually of two kinds: memory is also *sati*, supported by *saññā*. Due to the two working together, there is unforgetfulness about the past: The stronger *saññā* is, so is the memory. Unlike mindfulness, this is kept in the mind longer.

We remember what was done or said a long time ago — even as far back as a past life. There are many instances of people who can recall their previous life through natural memory.

A lady once told me that in her past life she was a cow with a calf. The owner used to keep them under a tree. During a rainstorm, a branch broke and fell on the cow which died. Reborn a human in that same village, she could not bear the painful emotions she felt when she heard that calf crying for its mother. On seeing grass, she would feel like eating it.

There is also a monk I know with a birthmark which looks like a big scar on his head. He related that in his previous life he was a fisherman. One day while he was in his hut, robbers came in and hit his head, killing him. Now, even as a monk, he has the urge to catch fish, on seeing water.

Not just about our past life, there are many things we forget. When we arrived on the first day of the course, what was for lunch? What did I lecture about then? Some of you may remember, some not! That is memory (or lack of it) and it does not concern knowledge.

Memory and knowledge are two different things. The latter penetrates the meaning of a dhamma, while sati cannot realise the object's nature. We say,

"Oh, last year I met you." This is not knowledge which comes accompanied with deep meaning. For instance, during the Buddha's lifetime there was a monk with a very poor memory. The Buddha gave him a piece of white cloth to rub on as an exercise. He knew that in a previous life this monk had been a king. One day, while touring the city on an elephant, as it was very hot, he wiped his face with a white handkerchief. He then noticed that it had become dirty. With that he realised the impure (*asubha*) nature of the body. Though he forgot about it, the energy was kept in his mind. It only surfaced many lives later under the right conditions with the Buddha's lesson; and so he became enlightened.

Can mindfulness be bad?

Up to this point *sati's* role has been wholesome as a beautiful mental state. However, what about thieves who steal? And terrorists and hunters who kill? They are also mindful — indeed they have to be more attentive. Also what makes someone take revenge on an enemy? Or remember evil things done or some sensual pleasure? Even a thief has to mark the victim's property to steal. A robber also remembers how to rob and then recall his crime. Do they all have *sati* too?

In the *suttas* their type of mindfulness would be called *micchā sati*. According to the Buddha though, not all mindfulness is *sati*. Not all remembering is *sati* too. The field has to be defined. We have to

know according to context and definition or else it would lead to mistakes and misunderstanding.

Do *sammā sati* and *micchā sati* share the same *sati*? *Sammā sati* is the mindfulness discussed earlier. The "sati" of thieves, terrorists and hunters is not a "bad" kind of *sati*. In *Abhidhamma sati* never associates with an unwholesome mind — only with a good one. If a person remembers unwholesome things, this cannot be called *sati*, which is defined for only kusala.

So the *micchā sati* of the *suttas* is not a "bad" *sati*, since by *Abhidhamma*'s definition, *sati* has to have only good qualities. The "*micchā sati*'s" *sati* is not the *sati* of *sammā sati*. It is only *akusala* mind arising. *Sati* cannot associate with evil but it can be polluted by it. Therefore *micchā sati* really describes only the absence of *sati* or is just the arising of unwholesome *cittas*.

Remembering something *akusala* cannot be called "*sati*" too, despite the term "*micchā sati*" used. Commentary says that it is just the arising of an unwholesome state like craving, hatred or delusion.

Consider *pamāda* or the absence of *sati* and also *appamāda* or the non-absence of *sati*. The latter term does not include all kinds of non-forgetfulness: only the mindfulness of wholesome states; and mindfulness to do *kusala*. So if we were to

remember some sensual pleasure is that *pamāda* or *appamāda*? It is *pamāda* as *appamāda* is defined as mindfulness of the good practice of *kusala* such as offering *dāna*, observing *sīla* and so on.

Without *sati*, *akusala* arises: we then direct the mind to sensual pleasures, never thinking of *dāna*, *sīla* or meditation. *Pamāda* is the cause of Death and the continued round of *saṃsāra*²⁴.

Who is your "self"?

To understand *anatta* or non-soul is very important. To do that, as a start we have to know how the concept of soul comes about. Not knowing, we would remain confused and would never be able to remove this belief in a permanent entity that we call "I". Because it has been held a long time in the mind, this wrong notion cannot easily be washed off.

Even during the Buddha's lifetime, all the religious teachers then who were experts in *samatha* or concentration and *jhānas* or absorption with attainment in *abhiññā* or direct knowledge could not overcome the idea of *atta*. The Buddha was the only one who declared that there was no such thing as a soul, only Nature's phenomena at work.

Why we think there is a soul?

Most of us are selfish. For us self-interest comes first (and second, third, fourth ...). We want only the

²⁴ In Dhammapada.

good and nice things in life for ourselves. Not only do we want to live longer, we want a better life in the future. It is because we assume we have this "self" to protect and cherish — sometimes at all costs. In this way *diṭṭhi* appears with this sense of self. Indeed it is the source of all wrong views.

Wrong view originates from *attavāda* (notion of soul or individuality) through our self-attachment or *lobha*. Without *lobha*, *diṭṭhi* cannot arise. Its supporters are conceit (*māna*) and ignorance (*moha*). Why is *lobha* essential for all views, and why not anger or doubt for instance? It is because of self-love, given the root of craving (*taṇhā*). The selfishness is so strong that one wants to preserve one's life and to live forever; so the idea of a permanent entity comes about. One is always thinking in terms of "I" and "mine", "he", "she" and so on. Such notions depend on self-centredness. That is why the Buddha said that only oneself is most beloved, more than the others.

These three — *diṭṭhi*, *lobha* and *māna* — have a different approach to the self due to their different views.

- *Lobha's* view: "This is mine,²⁵" we say this on seeing an object. For instance we think "This is my eye," and grasp at it, thinking we own it.
- *Māna's* approach: "This I am."²⁶ The object of

²⁵ *Etam mama.*

²⁶ *Eso 'ham asmi.*

conceit is the self's quality or qualification. Depending on it, we are proud.

- *Diṭṭhi's way*: This is my self.²⁷ The view is that the permanent entity exists: "When I die, my soul will take on another body." It is like moving into a new house: the same *atta* gets a new body at death.

Thus whoever has this idea of self holds one of these two views of eternalism (*sassata diṭṭhi*) or annihilationism (*uccheda diṭṭhi*). Even today, a majority of people believe that they are God's creation and that explains why they are here.

Believing that the spirit remains after death, many people want to ensure a better life for the soul after death or for the next life. Nowadays there are big garden cemeteries in some countries. In the Netherlands I visited one. There I saw a tomb with small toys — it was that of a young boy. People pray and spend a lot of money for decorating the tomb. Paying respect is okay. Some offer food. But it would be the animals that will eat it. Some keep the ashes thinking the spirit still remains there. In some traditions people spend more and more money for the dead than when the deceased was still alive.

Even Buddhists find it hard to avoid the wrong view of *atta*. Many devotees are eternalists who offer *dāna*, hoping for a better life ahead. This could

²⁷ *Eso me atta*.

partly be due to a faulty understanding of the *Jātaka* stories. Without knowledge of *Abhidhamma*, they have the idea that *Sumedha*, after passing through many lives in succession, became Gautama Buddha. Monks too are not free from such an eternalist view.

In Japan I visited a cemetery near Kobe. Some Japanese monks were chanting over the dead. I asked a monk why. He explained that it was to guide the spirit to a better life. Otherwise it would be difficult for it to find its way there. I asked how many spirits had been guided to a better life. He said that he did not know. This was the tradition.

Who sees: "I" or "eye"?

Yet according to the Buddha, the soul or *atta* is only a concept and there is really nothing to be called "I". There are only the five aggregates of mind-and-matter. The Buddha explained *anatta* to break up our idea of being an "I". For a long time we have clung to this impression of being real and solid (*ghana*) which is hard to remove. When flour is mixed with liquid, it becomes a compact mass. It is the same with our body. Separated into its components, there is no energy. Put these material qualities together and there is energy producing movement. The illusion of *satta saññā* makes us think that there is a permanent being present which is "me", a man or a woman.

Take the eye when it sees an object. We commonly think, "I see something," meaning we are carrying

out the act of seeing. But who is the "I" here? We should investigate this point.

We might think that "we" are the ones doing the seeing: "I want to see, so I see. I want to hear, so I hear." However, is that really so? If we were to analyse the body, we will not be able to find an "I" there. Is "I" the head? Or is "I" the arm? Is it the mind? Or the body?

The Buddha explained that depending on eye and a visible object which comes into contact with it, eye-consciousness arises — nothing more to it than phenomena just arising. Like a car with its components doing different functions: Is the wheel the car? Or is it the engine? Is it the petrol? If one part is missing, the car cannot move. Which part is the most important? We might say that it is the driver. But what if I were to remove the wheel or the petrol?

In the same way is the eye "I"? Or is eye consciousness "I"? No, they are just phenomena.

At the common level, you can say, "It's my eye and through it I am able to see." If so, there is no need to go to the eye-hospital if you are really its owner. In truth the eye is not "you" and it is not yours either. There is really no "us" or "ours", only the five aggregates of mind-and-matter — much like machines with energy that allow us to move, talk and so on. These are not permanent or

controllable as we had assumed them to be all along.

There is no doer, just functions. There is no one who experiences, just phenomena. If you can see this way, that is *sammā diṭṭhi*, with no room for self-attachment or self-concern.

To have right seeing, which is purification of view, *Abhidhamma* is essential. Without this knowledge, we cannot distinguish and analyse mind and matter harmoniously performing their functions. We will keep on thinking there is a permanent entity or soul in control. Then we need to practise to see mind and matter as they really are and not as a "man" or a "woman" by realising the following.

- Analytical knowledge of mind and matter to remove the illusion of solidity,
- Cause and effect: when a visible object comes into contact with the eye-base, mind arises. This is causality, that is, Nature at work — not the soul or the Creator. Without an object or the eye, there is no cause for eye consciousness to arise.

Unless we realise these two kinds of knowledge, we will continue with our wrong view and cannot be called true Buddhists, only so-called ones.

A good fear and an evil knowledge

In Myanmar there are quite a number of mad dogs

which can spread rabies. Suppose you were to see one coming at you, wouldn't fear arise? That is because you know how dangerous it would be if you got bitten. In the same way *samvega* arises when you see how dangerous conditioned things are, seeing impermanence, suffering and uncontrollability in them.

Fear is not akusala with *paññā*

Samvega is usually translated as "urgency". Its literal meaning though is "fear (with shaking)" which is better. Yet it is not the common fear associated with *dosa*. It is actually made up of *paññā* or *ñāṇa* (knowledge) plus *ottappa* (moral fear of evil situations).

Because of *paññā's* presence, there is no *dosa* which is *akusala* and with unhappy feeling. When it rises, there is urgency to meditate, to be free of conditioned things, and to renounce. It causes effort (*vīriya*) to be more and more.

King *Maghadeva* (in one of the *Bodhisatta's* lives told in the *Jātaka*) once asked his barber to pluck and show him any white hair that had appeared. Only after a very long period — in those days the lifespan was greatly extended — the barber finally showed him a white strand that had sprouted. The king became so frightened, he began to sweat — as though Death had come to invade. He thought, "I'm getting old and near death." As though raising the

white flag as a sign of surrender, he quickly renounced and left his kingdom to become a hermit. In Myanmar, *Taungphilar Sayadaw* was once a guru to the king. At one time he came to pay respect to a pagoda near Sagaing. He met *Shwe Oo Min Sayadaw* who lived in the forest of *Pahkangyi* with only an attendant. So *Taungphilar Sayadaw* asked, "Aren't you afraid to be in such deep forest?"

Shwe Oo Min Sayadaw replied, "I'm afraid. That's why I stay in the forest. You're not afraid. That's why you remain in the kingdom."

Taungphilar Sayadaw understood at once. He never returned to his monastery. Instead he went to Sagaing which was then the place for recluses.

Nowadays *lobha*, *dosa* and *moha* are so powerful and prevalent that *saṃvega* has become so scarce among us.

Imitation knowledge

In the same way that not all ignorance can be called *moha*, not all knowledge is *paññā*.

*Paññā*²⁸ is usually translated as knowledge or wisdom. Yet it is called by many other names, such as the *ñāṇa* found in *saṃvega*, given its many facets.

²⁸ *Paññā* = pa (analytically knowing all aspects in all kinds or things) + ñā (knowing).

It not just knows the surface but penetrates into the nature of things. For example ordinary people know water as just water and how to use it. Those who study about water know its composition chemically as H₂O as well as its chemical properties. That is how knowledge works.

It is also called *amoha* or non-delusion. Not only *moha's* absence is *paññā*, it removes delusion the same way light, when it appears, dispels darkness simultaneously.

Yet a person who is clever, knowledgeable and creative can invent new things or discover new theories and scientific laws. But this is mundane *paññā*, not Dhamma knowledge.

Abhidhammic scholar *Ledi Sayadaw* explained that when it comes to doing evil, *moha* appears like wisdom. It is not that *moha* does not know anything as ignorance. It knows how to do it, where wrongdoing is concerned. Therefore to torture and kill people, some have good "knowledge" — take the inventors of nuclear bombs and weapons for example. Their knowhow and inventions are not through knowledge. It is through *moha's akusala* power.

To distinguish this false knowledge from the real one in the *suttas*, *moha* is referred to as *miccha ñāṇa*: wrong understanding or intelligence.

Miccha ñāṇa is thinking of ways and means to harm, torture and kill, that is, to make others suffer. It is the means of *akusala* actions. Some people are cunning because their “knowledge” is wonderful. So many ways they can think of to harm and kill. However *ñāṇa* itself is not miccha.

We can in general classify people in two groups: those who are dull and the bright ones. For the latter group *moha* makes those who are learned and clever — especially intellectuals — become skillful and capable in evil actions. It shows them such-and-such means to do *akusala*: to cause trouble, harm and death. Nowadays we can point to terrorists as an example who made great trouble for the others.

Don't mistake indifference for equanimity

What is an indifferent feeling?

Let's say you bought a beautiful dress and wore it in front of the mirror. You had a very pleasant feeling seeing yourself in that dress. You wore it out the first time feeling very good in it. After one month there was no more of that feeling though you still like that dress and wear it out often.

It is difficult to know an indifferent feeling because it is not clear, lying between happiness and unhappiness. Only by inference can it be known. It is like a stone slab on muddy ground. If we can see

footprints on either side of the slab but none on it, we can tell that someone had walked across it. The feeling of indifference is like that. It arises when the object is not particularly desirable.

Upekkhā vedanā is not the *arahant's* or yogi's equanimity of *upekkha*. It is better translated as neutral, indifferent or moderate feeling²⁹. Though the Buddha used the same word "*upekkhā*"³⁰, He gave it a different meaning in different contexts. So we need to know the context or we could easily get confused.

Important to know *vedanā*

Everybody knows what feeling is like — *dukkha* or bodily pain, *sukha* or bodily happiness, *somanassa* or pleasurable and *domanassa* or displeasurable feeling, — except for indifferent feeling which is difficult to detect. No *citta* can be without one of these five types of *vedanā*. If one is absent, another will appear. Feelings can start from the mind, giving rise to bodily effect; or they could originate in the body, affecting the mind. You can lie cosily in bed on a cold night, feeling mentally at ease — that is *sukha* or bodily happiness. Or you might be lying sick in bed when you are told good news (won the

²⁹ *Adukkha-masukhā vedanā* or feeling that is neither pleasant nor unpleasant.

³⁰ *Upekkhā* = *upa* [properly, moderate, not extreme] + *ikkha* [seeing, looking, for example].

lottery for instance). You immediately forget the bodily pain in your joy. This is *somanassa* or pleasurable feeling (of mind origin) forgetting bodily effect. In Sri Lanka at noon the tarred road can become very hot. Once I saw a barefoot and bare-headed boy singing happily as he walked along the road, never caring about the heat.

Physical pain can make the mind painful with worry. Have you seen anyone with a toothache smile? Sick people usually complain, have to take a painkiller, or go to the doctor. Then should it be a serious illness like cancer, not only do they have to cope with the pain, distress also follows along, "Oh, I'm going to die. I must leave my loved ones."

Only one arrow that wounds

We are unlike the *Arahant* who keeps on realising sense objects, knowing their nature with clear comprehension (*sampajañña*) and mindfulness. Though he continues to have feelings, he dwells in equanimity and keeps a balanced mind even with physical suffering. The *Arahant* has *dukkha* or physical pain but no *domanassa* or displeasurable feeling. He has *somanassa* or pleasurable feeling and *sukha* or bodily happiness but no attachment. This is because no mental defilements of *lobha*, *dosa*, and *moha* are able to rise.

At one time the Buddha's foot was wounded by a splinter from a rock which *Devadatta* had pushed

down to kill him at the foot of a hill. As He could not walk, He had to be carried on a litter to *Jivaka's* monastery. The Buddha had to lie down day and night, as the wound was very painful. In those days there were no painkillers. That night *devas* came to ask about His injury. They were filled with admiration as the Buddha being mentally unaffected, never complained, smiling as though nothing had happened. The Buddha was protected by His mind as He could separate painful feeling from it. There was no worrying at all. He had *dukkha* but no *domanassa*.

According to the Buddha, "If the body is in pain, train your mind not to have pain too." This is because it is natural for the body to have pain. Wrong view of "I" and "mine" and *lobha-dosa-moha* give rise to mental pain. So we need to practise *vedanānupassanā* by contemplating "this pain isn't 'I or mine'," that it is impermanent and so on.

Then for the ordinary person with mental pain there is likely to be physical suffering too. For instance, after the death of a dearly loved one, like a parent or a child, some people cannot eat or sleep. One arrow of mental (or physical) pain has penetrated the heart to be followed by a second arrow of physical (or mental) pain.

It is the same even every day as sense objects invade us the minute we awake. Then thought

follows. When we see — or hear, smell, taste, touch as well as think about — something nice, we are happy and want more. If it is unpleasant, we dislike it and push it away. Or if it is neither, we remain indifferent. So our mental states bounce continuously from liking to disliking and to indifference. This is a natural situation of an untrained mind.

The Buddha teaches us that when sense objects invade us, we should not follow them with craving or dislike. Instead we should try to realise their nature or else ignorance arises. That is why He had a section just on *vedanā* in the *Mahāsatipatṭhāna Sutta* to show how important feelings are.

An “unknown” feeling

Upekkhā vedanā or indifferent feeling is not easy to understand. You throw a stone in the air. At its highest point, it stops just before it starts to fall: that moment is *upekkhā*, that neutral point lying between a pleasant and an unpleasant feeling.

We have got to find it or else *avijjā* reigns in us. When an indifferent feeling arises in us without our noticing it, ignorance also appears from its latent state as *avijjānusaya*. Not knowing is the delusion of *avijjā* and the indifference associated with it is *aññānupekkhā*.³¹

³¹ *Aññāna* [ignorance] + *upekkhā* [neutral feeling].

When ignorance is in control, it brings with it two helpers: restlessness (*uddhacca*) and doubt (*vicikicchā*). With wandering thoughts we cannot concentrate on one object as our mind cannot be squarely on the object. So the mind is not at peace. The feeling is also unclear as we cannot be happy or unhappy about an object. We become confused about what to do: unable to choose between right and wrong. Because of doubt, we are as though at a junction, not knowing whether to turn left or right, to select this or that, to know whether it is true or not. Doubt is dangerous for the reason that we find it hard to continue to study, meditate or to do *kusala*. Because of ignorance, we do not know the nature of dhammas as *avijjā* is opposed to knowledge. It leads to misunderstanding and even wrongdoing.

Real equilibrium

The "right type" of *upekkhā*³² is not the feeling of indifference but a mental attitude very difficult to obtain. When the equanimity of *tatramajjhataṭṭā*³³

³² There are various types of *upekkhā* which can be classified into four categories: as (1) *vedanā*, (2) *vīriya*, (3) *paññā*, and (4) *tatramajjhataṭṭā*. So not all *upekkhās* are equanimity but it can be neutral feeling; or it can be effort which is moderate — neither more or less — called *vīriyupekkhā*. *Sanikhārupekkhā ñāṇa* or insight knowledge of equanimity towards conditioned things is a *paññā* type of *upekkhā*. As for *tatramajjhataṭṭā*, the group of associated dhammas are in a state of equanimity or calmness. For instance, the *upekkhā* as a factor of enlightenment (*sambojjhaṅga*) and *brahmavihāra upekkhā* are classed as *tatramajjhataṭṭā*.

³³ *Tatramajjhataṭṭā* = Tatra [those associated dhammas] +

arises, all the associated dhammas function well, working equally in a state of moderation under its power. *Samādhi*, *sati* and *paññā*, for example, in meditation, all are balanced. So there is no need for effort.

This is like the *arahant's upekkhā: chalangupekkhā* or the equanimity with six factors (that is, in seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and thinking). It is also accessible to striving yogis.

In the practice of *vipassanā*, once we gain *saṅkhārupekkhā* or insight knowledge of equanimity, no *lobha* or *dosa* arises. For somebody we like a lot, no love arises. For someone very hateful, we do not cultivate hate or dislike. When insulted, we are not angry, or happy when honoured. Knowledge keeps the mind calm and peaceful with no mental ups and downs.

In those days there were only horse carriages. Nowadays we use cars on cruise as a simile instead. On the highway there is no need for any complicated manoeuvres -- unlike in a crowded lane with many junctions. The driver has only to steer because everything is balanced. The road is smooth; there is no traffic.

With it the yogi can concentrate on the meditation

majjhataṭṭā [equanimity, neutrality, calmness, middleness]

object easily, not needing great effort, having good supporting conditions. *Anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* are clear to him.

The conceit that should be kept

Conceit or pride keeps us up, generally speaking. *Ledi Sayadaw* explains that a conceited person wants to be in a higher position: "I'm a somebody in this world. I'm not a useless piece of wood." "Conceit" is not a good word: *māna* actually means "regarding oneself," that is, "I am such-and-such."

With *māna* we are always thinking about ourselves, referring to an "I" by comparing with the others. We imagine ourselves at the highest pinnacle above the others with our family background, respect from others, and so on. Even morality can cause pride: "I can keep better *sīla* than the rest of the yogis." With learning: "I'm so learned. I know all there's to know about *Abhidhamma*, even *Paṭṭhāna*."

Even if we are correct about that quality or ability, thinking about it shows pride. It is *akusala*, that is, a mental defilement. Even Venerable *Anuruddha* was not above it. As a *puthujjana*, having attained the divine eye in meditation, he could see a thousand universes. Yet he had to consult Venerable *Sāriputta* about why he could not gain enlightenment. The Venerable replied, "Stating that you can see a thousand universes shows your *māna* (conceit). Don't think about it. It blocks you from being

enlightened." Though it was a fact, thinking that he could do it was pride.

Most people however would not see such a thought as conceit. But poison is still poison: no matter how subtle, evil can be a great hindrance at that level in meditation. So in the practice of meditation, be careful not to think, "Oh, I can sit for five hours straight." Don't think this way. Such self-satisfaction can block your progress.

Though the Buddha sometimes says, "I'm the *Tathāgata*," that is not *māna*. The Buddha does not have this pride with the idea of "I am". With ordinary people, however, there is the idea of self-love based on *lobha* and self-concern.

Māna has different levels and degrees.

Everybody has it; whether that position we think we have is high, equal or low, it is still *māna*. A person of low caste can still think about status, except that he thinks he does not care.

Even beggars have their māna

One day a gentleman called to a beggar: "Don't beg anymore. Come and work in my garden. I'll pay you."

The beggar replied, "Sir, I'm a beggar. I don't care about your salary. I can get more than what you pay."

So that is a beggar's *māna*. Even beggars have their pride. This is *hīna māna* (lowly conceit) which is according to an inferior status in comparison with others. *Seyya māna* is for one who considers oneself at a higher rank than the others. Then a person with *sadisa māna* sees the others as his equal.

Keeping our qualities low is also *māna*. You might say: "Oh, I'm not educated. I can't understand *Abhidhamma* at all. It's too difficult for me to follow." Many do not realise this is also a kind of *māna*.

So in all *māna* has nine aspects: with its three different ranks of individuals and its three different aspects (superiority, equality and inferiority) in quality.

Can *māna* be wholesome?

Though *māna* is considered unwholesome, it can sometimes lead to a good result: an *akusala* state can lead to a *kusala* state. So some types of pride should be kept. Wouldn't you agree?

Which types should be kept? Which should not be kept? Take the case of a son now well-educated who despises his lowly-educated parents and childhood friends, "They're so stupid." This *māna* should be eradicated as it leads to a woeful state.

If we are offering *dāna*, practising *sīla* or *bhāvanā*

(mental cultivation), we need to check which type it is. Which type is acceptable? "If he can offer *dāna* or observe *sīla*, so can I." This type is good and gives good result. "I alone can offer this much *dāna*, unlike the rest." This type should not be kept.

Sometimes we think, "He knows a lot of *Abhidhamma*. If I try to be like him, I'll also be just as good." Or "He's just like me. Yet he has succeeded in getting a BA in Buddhist studies. Well, so can I if I try."

Such pride should be kept unlike most *māna* which should not. This type leads you to a good state, a higher state. For instance, the *Bodhisatta* was a very intelligent person who could have attained *arahatta magga* under the guidance of *Dīpaṅkara* Buddha. But when He received the prophecy from the Buddha, He considered: "I can also become the Buddha like *Dīpaṅkara*." That thought was because of *māna*.

You can call it ambition or motivation by comparing yourself with others. Let's say you find out a friend of yours became enlightened and you tell yourself, "He became a *Sotāpanna*. Why don't I try to be enlightened too?"

So *māna* can lead to success. *Sumedha's māna* led Him to become a Buddha. This type of *māna* leads to raising oneself unlike *taṇhā* or desire with craving

to enjoy sensual pleasures.

In the Dhamma whatever leads to good result is okay. Whatever that doesn't is not okay.

Can *Arahants* have ignorance?

A goldsmith's son was ordained under Venerable *Sāriputta*. As preceptor, *Sāriputta* instructed him in meditation. As he thought the young monk had too much attachment (love and hate very strong), he taught *asubha* meditation to lessen it: to consider the body organs as impure, hair and body hair as ugly, and so on.

The young monk, respectful of *Sāriputta*, obeyed and worked hard. But he could not even attain concentration. His mind could not be directed to impurities, and kept wandering about. Venerable *Sāriputta* gave him more and more instructions. After four months, he then considered, "This young monk's very good and works hard. Yet he still hasn't succeeded."

Venerable *Sāriputta* then sent him to the Buddha who considered all the aspects of this young monk. For the meditation master, biodata is very important, that is, biodata of previous lives!

The Buddha saw that he had been a goldsmith in his past lives. That was why he always considered beautiful things. Impure objects were not suitable

as he did not like dirty and ugly things — these being against his nature.

The Buddha then created a beautiful lotus and handed it to the young monk, "Go to a quiet place. Place it in front of you. Then look at it — at the red colour." This is a *kasina* device, a device of *jhāna*.

The monk was very happy looking at it, interested in the beauty of the flower. He immediately established concentration whilst looking. His mind was no longer restless: it quietened and focused on his object. Attaining *jhāna* his mind remained in absorption for a long period.

The Buddha considered the monk from His place and saw that he had attained *jhāna*. "Can he by himself find the way to *vipassanā*?" Then He knew that it was impossible for the monk to switch to *vipassanā* on his own. So the Buddha created a lotus that wilted for the monk.

Withdrawing from *jhāna*, the young monk saw that the flower had wilted and become brown. The idea of impermanence entered his head.

"Oh, the very beautiful lotus has now become ugly. All conditioned things are subject to impermanence. So nothing's permanent." He was on his way to *vipassanā*. Then knowledge increased more and more till he became an *Arahant*.

Venerable *Sāriputta* did not know the way because his knowledge was not up to the Buddha's standard. This knowledge of knowing yogis' nature and inner temperament is only peculiar to the Buddha, not even His Chief Disciple. We can say it is a kind of "wrong" doing. However it is not *akusala*. It is just that *Sāriputta* was not perfect in his knowledge or correct in his work.

Some people would think that he had ignorance since the Venerable did not know what kind of meditation would be suitable.

Indeed, some Mahayanist sects in India of earlier days maintained that *Arahants* still had *moha*. According to them, the *Arahants* had not totally eradicated ignorance (*avijjā*) because they still had to ask questions. Actually *Arahants* have eradicated all defilements. For instance, they would ask people they met, "What's your name?" or if they did not know the way to go somewhere, "How to get there?" In that case we could also say the same thing of the Buddha. Sometimes when monks came to see Him, He would ask, "Where did you come from?" Or He would ask a person he met, "What's your name?"

The Buddha's omniscience: not 24 hours

If we close our eyes, we cannot see. If we do not use our eyes, can we see? The Buddha's

omniscience is like that. If He did not use it, He could not “see”, for example, while asleep. He never claimed that it was present all the time. He rejected this idea of being omnipresent. When He did not use His *sabbaññutañāṇa*, He would have to ask questions.

If we have a knife and we set it aside, it cannot work. Only when we use it can it cut. Now you are attending class; you are not concentrating on a meditation object. It is not the same object. It is the same with the Buddha’s *sabbaññutañāṇa*. Whenever He wished to know something, there would be no hindrances. His omniscience could penetrate anywhere, wherever He directed it. And He would know completely and perfectly, unlike us with our very little knowledge.

On the other hand, the six religious teacher-contemporaries of the Buddha claimed to be omnipresent. While awake or asleep, walking, and so on, their omniscience was on 24 hours like a light. In some *suttas* of *Majjhima Nikāya*, the Buddha rejected their claim. If so why were they frightened of the fierce dogs they encountered? Why did they have to ask the way to go somewhere? Why do they need to ask the names of people they met?

Avijjā should be defined. If we do not know a person’s name, the species of a tree, or the way to

go somewhere, is that *avijjā*? By definition there are the eight fields of ignorance: the five aggregates concerning the past, the future, both the past and future, causality and the Four Noble Truths. Other kinds of ignorance are not considered as *avijjā*.

Even some *Arahants* do not remember their past lives. However they are not confused or have doubts about them. That is to say there is no *avijjā* about their past lives. Yet they have no recall. Even Venerable *Sāriputta* only knew up to a limited number of lives, remaining "ignorant" about his earlier ones. Non-*ariyas*, even non-Buddhists too can remember their past lives. But they are unlike the *Arahants* who know for sure about their past lives whether with inferential knowledge or with memory.

Though *Arahants* may be ignorant of their past lives, people's names and so on, they have realised the eight fields and *Nibbāna*.

Not all-perfect like the Buddha

While we cannot say that *arahants* like Venerable *Sāriputta* have *moha*, nonetheless they can still make mistakes as their knowledge is not as perfect as the Buddha's. Students' knowledge cannot equal their professor's. But if He were to explain, they would understand, though the level of understanding is different from their teacher's. It cannot be on the same level. Though light is just light, light from a 5-, 20- or 100-watt bulb

respectively cannot be the same.

To get somewhere, if we know how to drive, it can be done. We need not know the mechanics of how the car works. To reach Nibbāna we must know how to do it, like driving a car. It is unnecessary to know everything else. *Arahants* are like the drivers who only know how to drive, and not know everything else. How to drive is knowing the Four Noble Truths, and so on.

You see, in a university people have different subjects like mathematics, psychology, philosophy, medical science and so on. They know their own field, not the others. Can we say, "If they don't know everything — all the fields — then they're not educated."? They know only their own subject, not the others. Only the Buddha can realise all of the Dhamma.

Even terrorists can be 3-rooted (*tihetuka*³⁴)

Knowledge makes you different at birth — not a MA or PhD but a wisdom root.

Our life starts with a wholesome resultant consciousness (called *mahāvipāka citta*) at the birth

³⁴ Of the 8 types of *kusala* rebirth consciousness: 4 are complete with the 3 roots of *alobha-adosa-amoha*. The other 4 have only 2 roots of *alobha* and *adosa*, without the wisdom root that can bring about enlightenment and *Jhāna* attainments.

moment. This birth-relinking mind links our previous life to the present one. Death immediately leads to birth through this *kusala* mind. Only humans and deities are born with this resultant *citta* — the result of good kamma from a past life.

This wholesome mind comes complete with the three good roots of *alobha-adosa-amoha*. The difference between it and a two-rooted birth-relinking mind is the wisdom or knowledge mental factor (*paññā cetasika*). The one with knowledge makes understanding easier. If this wisdom factor is missing, then the intellect is slow and dull. It is like growing two strains of mango in the same conditions. The lesser type has more difficulty in developing.

You can see the difference in a class. When the teacher explains something: some understand very fast, a few cannot understand at all. Even practitioners of the Dhamma are of four types.

* Quickly understands: in one sitting, while listening, contemplating and applying the Dhamma all at one go, a person can be enlightened. Such was *Visākhā* at seven years of age. Though young in years, her knowledge was not young. Others like *Sāriputta* and *Moggallāna* also realised the Dhamma just through talk. This is *ugghaṭṭitaññū*.

* Needs great explanation or *vipañcitaññū*: one who

knows through explanation of the Dhamma because of his lower qualification.

* Needs long practice daily in addition or *neyya* (carry on). One must carry on, waiting for the mature stage, that is, great explanations are not enough. One must carry on day by day in practice too. It can take a week or 30 years. This was the case of a *thera* who always cried after each *vassa* for 30 years because he could not attain *Arahatta magga*.

* Cannot understand even the words or *padaparama*.

The Buddha said the fourth type cannot attain *Nibbāna* in this life but has a chance in the next life.

How to tell among ourselves whether we are two- or three-rooted? The Buddha said that if you can distinguish others' talk whether it is good or evil, then you are *tihetuka*. If you cannot tell the difference, then you are not.

A two-rooted person can still be a *cūḷa-sotāpanna*

Though one without the wisdom root finds it difficult, knowledge of lower and mid-level can be attained if he works hard at it. He could even become *cūḷa-sotāpanna*³⁵ if he tries hard ... though

³⁵ A *cūḷa-sotāpanna* is one with analytical knowledge of mind-and-matter and knowledge of causality. With two such levels of

admittedly it is not easy.

A three-rooted person can still go wrong

Even though those with high attainments are three-rooted, there are others who hold wrong view — and still have three roots. One such person is Prince *Ajātasattu*. Despite his three roots he could still kill his father. For that he could not be enlightened though he had the potential in that very life.

Even believers of other religions — even terrorists — can have full three roots. Famous scientists and inventors can also be with the wisdom root. But as they all do not practise the Dhamma, they are far from the right path.

Present conditions just as important

Many people in Myanmar point to *pāramī* or perfections and past kamma to explain their lot in life. However, they cannot say that all is due to past kamma. That would be wrong view³⁶. Many present conditions and circumstances — not just the past alone — together produce their result.

Depending on present conditions, anyone with

knowledge through learning, he can be called so if he applies what he has learnt to practice. This is because he has no doubt about the Buddha-Dhamma, mind-and-matter, and causality. He has faith with knowledge about the Triple Gems, and observes the five precepts faithfully.

³⁶ *Pubbekata hetu diṭṭhi*.

tihetuka who practises meditation can attain enlightenment. If lazy then he will not. That is the problem. Lots have knowledge but they are not willing to practise and make no effort. This is the type these days: many are intelligent with a good situation in life. But they only want to enjoy life and sensual pleasures. In Myanmar some children are not even interested in school or learning though they have the brains and good conditions. It is like keeping good seeds in a bottle; they eventually dry up.

There is no difference between an *Arahant's* three roots and those of an ordinary person. But the present *cittas* are different though. Initially both were of the same quality. It is like two boys of the same level of intelligence. One gets to university and graduates; the other did not go to school.

Having the right "root" is nothing if you do nothing about it with the present conditions.

Nothing is lost in trying

Many people just study without applying to themselves. Application is more important and useful. When I explain Dhamma you pay attention and then apply what you have learnt. Listening to Dhamma is also practice. Many became enlightened at the end of the Buddha's talk, though that also depends on their level of knowledge.

If you practise seriously, you may attain enlightenment in this life if your *saddhā*, *vīriya*, *saññā* and *paññā* become mature. If not, then in the next life surely. Look at *Visākhā* who became a *Sotāpanna* at seven years of age, because of her former life's practice. Knowledge and practice are never lost from life to life.

You may think that you are what you are in life because of past kamma. But effort and hard work matter a lot regardless of whether you are a two- or three-rooted person. As a young child you went to school. Now you are no longer schooling, but all you learnt has accumulated in you. Whenever you want to know, what you learnt will come again.

Today's practice is for tomorrow. Tomorrow's practice is for next year. It is like climbing a mountain: first is the first step, the second step brings you nearer than the first, and so on. If nobody tries, no one will arrive at the summit. If you do not practise, you will never get to *Nibbāna*.

Don't say, "I've no *pāramīs*." Don't wait for *pāramīs*. Pointing to it is an excuse for laziness. You have to work hard to learn and to increase knowledge. You have to apply what has been learnt and to practise. The effect will come by itself. The only essential is to work hard first.

Sādhū ! Sādhū ! Sādhū !

REALISING *NIBBĀNA*

All Buddhists know that *Nibbāna* is their goal. Although some know what the word means, many more do not. The majority of people just know how to repeat after the monk, "*Idaṃ me puññaṃ, Nibbānassa paccayo hoti*," when they do merit. They have been taught by tradition to wish for *Nibbāna*.

***Nibbāna* only when *taṇhā* ceases**

What is *Nibbāna*? Some people know roughly that it is freedom from aging, suffering and death. On the other hand this may lead many among them to think that in *Nibbāna* they will remain forever without having to grow old, to suffer or die.

All living beings cherish their lives. We crave for existence. With this craving or *bhavataṇhā*, we would like to live forever. So our *taṇhā* is *bhava-taṇhā* and *sassata-diṭṭhi* or eternity-belief combined. As long as it is present, we take delight in our existence wherever or in whatever form we may take rebirth. Whether as a person or an animal we are satisfied with our life. Without *bhava-taṇhā* there can be no liking. It is only in the extreme case of suffering (*dukkha*) that it is otherwise.

Look at chickens and birds. Even those confined in

cages are able to enjoy life and be happy. They peck, cheep and cackle, teasing and playing with one another. Just being alive is pleasurable³⁷ on account of joy and happiness (*pīti* and *sukha*). In this way we are satisfied to remain in continual existence. So for those of us with *bhavataṇhā*, the very idea of *Nibbāna* is frightful: *bhava nirodho nibbānam*, that is, in *Nibbāna* is life's cessation. Why is this so? Since we enjoy life so much, we would probably wonder with the ending of existence where would we end up? Thinking this way we become alarmed.

In contrast to *bhavataṇhā* is *vibhava taṇhā*.³⁸ There are some people who prefer non-existence. However it is not that they want to be finished with life by the practice of the Dhamma. It is just that as they loathe their present life — having to face a lot of problems and suffering — they do not want to face the next one. Then some of these people think that life will end with death anyway. It is a strange form of *taṇhā* linked with *uccheda-diṭṭhi* or annihilation-view. So liking to be without existence is also called *taṇhā*.

Liking for non-being is still *taṇhā*: it does not regard *Nibbāna* at all because there is clinging to this state of non-attachment to living. Therefore these people's attachment is still called *vibhava-taṇhā* as they crave for life's extinction. As long as

³⁷ *Bhavasukha*.

³⁸ *Vibhava* = vi [without] + bhava [existence].

bhava-taṇhā or *vibhava-taṇhā* is present, *Nibbāna* cannot be realised.

Kāma-taṇhā or sensuous-craving comes about simply once there is human life. Because of features like the eyes, ears, nose, tongue and body, through them respectively visible form, sound, smell, taste and touch will appear. Then liking arises for these objects: this is *kāma-taṇhā*. This clinging to sense objects has such great power that it acts as the guiding force of life. For this reason the Buddha pointed to *taṇhā*'s role in the Noble Truth of the origin of suffering³⁹. In various *suttas*, this dhamma is said to bring about *bhavanetti* (leading to existence).

The term "*Nibbāna*" has a negative sense. The word can be split into two parts with different meanings: "*nir*" and "*vāna*." "*Nir*" is "to be free from"; while "*vāna*" means the attachment of *taṇhā*. Thus *Nibbāna* is only realised when there is freedom from *taṇhā*. So long as there is something to be clung to, no matter what kind of attachment, then *Nibbāna* cannot be reached. Hence it is named *nirvāna* — *vāna saṅkhātāya taṇhāya* — it is where there can be no attachment.

So first of all we should note that only when attachment has been removed can *Nibbāna* be

³⁹ *Dukkha samudayo ariya saccaṃ.*

realised. Some people may say, "I'm not attached to anyone, not even my children. Not my property and wealth either: all have been given up." That is what some may claim.

Attachment to something (or someone) is always followed by something else, one after another. It is not possible to be free of attachment. Being childless, you can have no fetters to either a son or daughter. Nonetheless, you still have fetters to other objects. If it is not this one, then it is something else. For someone with *taṇhā* it is impossible not to be attached. At the very least, the person you still cling to is only yourself.

Who are people most attached to? It is to themselves⁴⁰. For this reason, the Buddha said, "The attachment one has for oneself cannot be matched by any other." The most beloved in the world is oneself. It is through one's self-love that one loves one's children and property. You may think it is love for another. It isn't so. It is love for one's sake. You are happy with your children and your property. You like that sense of happiness. To whom does it belong? It is yours only; it is not the others' happiness.

You would not tolerate anyone spoiling that happiness: even your son or daughter – your

⁴⁰ *Atta samam pemaṃ natthi.*

so-called loved one – you would publicly disinherit. The reason is that you value your own happiness more. You can have no more affection for whoever threatens that happiness. Really if you were to look carefully at the fundamental level, you would find that people love themselves most.

Only on becoming a *Sotāpanna* are you able to struggle free of this attachment. Yet *Sotāpannas* still have attachment, although it is not enough to drag them to *apāya* or woeful states. Whether it is attachment to things or to a person, they can no longer commit the kind of *akusala* or unwholesomeness that leads to a bad rebirth, as its force has been reduced.

On becoming a *Sakadāgāmi*, your attachment is further lessened. What is the difference between a *Sotāpanna* and a *Sakadāgāmi*? Attachment arises in a *Sakadāgāmi* once out of 10 likely occasions: for every nine occurrences of attachment that arise in a *Sotāpanna*, the *Sakadāgāmi* experiences it only once or twice. The incidence of attachment not only becomes less, so is its force. The *Sakadāgāmi's* *tanihā* has so much decreased that it is almost non-existent. There is still a little left in the *Sotāpanna*. Even if *pariyuṭṭhāna kilesas* or transgressive defilements occur, they are weak. That is the difference.

When you become an *Anāgāmi*, *kāmarāga* or

sensuous-desire and *byāpāda* or ill-will no longer occur in you. As there is no more desire for sensual objects, what can you be attached to? Your *jhānic* attainments and realisation of the Dhamma are your new attachment. Though you are free of the lower or sensuous plane of men and deities, you are now interested in the *Brahma* realm. This is still a sort of *bhavarāga* or craving for existence, whether it is *rūparāga* or material realm or *arūparāga* or immaterial realm.

Finally it reaches a point where there is no sense desire or craving for any object, not even to life. Then what can you still be attached to? There is still the Dhamma that you yourself have realised. *Dhammarāga* or *Dhammanandī* is what it is called.

As long as there is *Dhammarāga*, you are attached to your *vipassanā* insight⁴¹. As long as there is delight and satisfaction, *Arahatta magga* (path) and *phala* (fruition) will not be realised. You stop at *Anagamī* level and will not reach *Arahantship*.

When all attachment even for the Dhamma has been abandoned, you are then completely released. At the time, freedom from attachment means liberation from life. Where there is attachment, there is still life. This is how it should be seen: *Nibbāna* is total liberation from attachment.

⁴¹ *Teneva Dhamma rāgena, tāyeva Dhamma nandiyā.*

Then in various *suttas*, the Buddha stated, "*Nibbāna* is the noblest [state]⁴²." That is to say, it is the highest goal. Then again the Buddha said, "*Nibbānaṃ paramaṃ sukhaṃ. Nibbāna* is the best of all kinds of happiness."

People are usually fond of happiness. If so how do we imagine *Nibbānic* bliss to be like? When the eye sees a pleasant object, there is a happy feeling. Similarly when the ear hears a sound; when the nose smells an odour; the tongue, a taste; the body, a touch; and the mind, a thought; a feeling arises. This is followed by various thoughts which give rise to *sukha* or bodily happiness and *somanassa* or pleasurable feeling. With objects of sensual pleasure, the pleasure comes with attachment.

We would probably then compare this happiness we experience with sense objects with the bliss of *Nibbāna*. We would consider that both are similar. This is how people who still have *taṇhā-lobha* would reflect as they recite, "*Nibbāna, Nibbāna*," on doing merit.

According to *Abhidhammattha saṅgaha*, *Nibbāna* has this quality of being above the world⁴³. It means that although *Nibbāna* is connected to the world, it

⁴² *Khantī paramaṃ tapoti tikkhā, Nibbānaṃ paramaṃ vadanti Buddhā.*

⁴³ *Nibbānaṃ lokuttara saṅkhātāṃ.*

has passed beyond it and does not belong to it. Here the world refers to that of *āyatana* (sense-bases) and *dhātu* (elements). In other words *Nibbāna* exceeds the *loka* (mundane world), passing into the *lokuttara* (supramundane). We are freed from the *sankhāras* (conditioned things) of *nāma-rūpa* (mind and matter) which we experience everyday.

Nibbāna realised by Four Maggas

Through what means is *Nibbāna* realised? It is said that only through the four *maggas* (paths) can this state be realised. Otherwise, ordinary eyesight and intellect cannot see or realise *Nibbāna*. You need to know through your own experience – to perceive it with your own “internal” eyes.

So only knowledge can perceive *Nibbāna*. *Nibbāna* cannot be grasped with your eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body or by means of the ordinary mind. That is why only the four *maggas* can perceive it⁴⁴, as it is the object⁴⁵ of *magga citta* (path consciousness) and *phala citta* (fruition consciousness).

I have said time and time again that without any object *citta* (consciousness) cannot arise. That is its nature. So what is the object of *magga citta* and *phala citta*? Their object is *Nibbāna*. That is to say, *Nibbāna* is *magga citta* and *phala citta* object. If

⁴⁴ *Catummagga ñāṇeṇa sacchikātabbāṃ.*

⁴⁵ *Maggaphalāna mārammaṇa bhūtaṃ.*

there is no object that is *Nibbāna*, then both these *cittas* cannot arise.

What is the object of *cakkhu viññāṇa* (eye consciousness)? It is only on contact with a visible object that the *citta* appears. *Sota viññāṇa* (ear consciousness) arises only on meeting a sound; *ghāṇa viññāṇa* (nose consciousness) in contact with smell; *jivhā viññāṇa* (tongue consciousness) with taste; and *mano viññāṇa* (mind consciousness) in touch with the rest of the other dhamma objects. Among these internal dhammas *Nibbāna* is included. *Magga citta* and *phala citta* are also included among the *mano viññāṇas*. However, they do not occur ordinarily. Only with intensive practice of *vipassanā*, due to their power can *magga* and *phala* occur.

These *cittas* are not the sort of natural consciousness which you are born with. Only after you have trained with mind-and-matter objects that your mind becomes clean, clear and pure. At this point your (knowledge) *paññā* (knowledge) becomes bright, along with *saddhā* (faith), *vīriya* (effort), *satī* (mindfulness) and *samādhi* (concentration). These also are strengthened. *Vipassanā* knowledge increases as well. At the end only *magga citta* and *phala citta* arise.

Much has been written about *Nibbāna*. Some writers – without the real experience to rely on – having

read much about the subject, have combined their research with their own ideas to put into writing. In this case there is nothing much to argue about: if you have not realised *Nibbāna*, what everyone says about it could be acceptable. Also what another person says can never be adequate. Only by experiencing for yourself the taste of *Nibbāna* can you know what it is. So it is wholly a waste of time to argue about who is right.

If you wish to realise what *Nibbāna* is, then try to attain *magga* and *phala*. Is that right or not? If you make no attempt, then whatever people tell you could be acceptable. For instance: It is only in southern part of Henzada where *Nibbāna* (a name of a town) can be found. Or it can be realised only near Bago. Until you yourself try to walk the route shown by the Buddha to reach *Nibbāna*, you will have to continue to rely on others' words.

Nibbānam paramam sukham. *Nibbāna* is the best of all happiness. "Yes, in this *Nibbānic* bliss, one does not have to grow old, suffer or die. How fitting, how suitable. This way I'll always remain forever." Thus this wish to attain *Nibbāna* is coupled with *bhavataṇhā* (craving for existence). *Nibbāna* becomes merely one of *taṇhā*' objects.

Most people understand "happiness" as certainly what is pleasing. They think it regards their own happiness. Yet in *Nibbāna* the *vedanā* that

experiences a happy feeling is not there. There is no happy feeling to be experienced: This the Buddha taught in *Udāna* and *Itivutta Pāḷi*. Mahasi Sayadaw also wrote *Nibbāna paṭisaṃyutta kathā* (Discourse regarding Nibbāna) based on these two texts. Then there is *Ledi Sayadaw's About Nibbāna*. Previous Sayadaws of bygone days too wrote *About Nibbāna* based on the literature. They could also have realised *Nibbāna* themselves. Though more often than not, one would usually put on paper one's reflections after studying the texts. Asking "whose *Nibbāna* is correct or which *Nibbāna* is correct?" would be futile.

So that is one point to be noted. Then in examining the word *Nibbāna*, you will find the essence in the meaning: *Nibbāna* is the arising of the *lokuttara* (supramundane). By this, one meaning is that it is not a part of the *loka* (world). That is another point to be noted.

A further point is this: only the four *maggas* are able to realise *Nibbāna*. It is the object of *magga citta* and *phala citta*⁴⁶. Being the object of *magga* and *phala* consciousness, why is *Nibbāna* called so? *Taṇhā* that joins one life to the next is called "*vāṇā*". Liberating oneself from it is thus called *Nibbāna*⁴⁷.

Where is *Nibbāna*?

⁴⁶ *Maggaphalāna mārammaṇa bhūtaṃ.*

⁴⁷ *Vāṇa sankhātāya taṇhāya nikkhanchattā.*

Then if so, where is *Nibbāna* found? Not knowing where it is, you might be led to think that by going to a village south of Henzada, you will experience it there. To the question "Where is *Nibbāna*?" the Buddha replied, "*Nibbāna* is in one's *nāma-rūpa* (mind and body)." So *Nibbāna* is related to oneself. This is in the *Rohitassa Sutta* where the Buddha said, "The body is about a fathom long⁴⁸. The body – whether short or large – goes by its standard measurement of a fathom. Isn't this so? Don't make this a point for dispute: "You can't be a fathom, you're quite short!" For mice, it is a mouse's cubit; for elephants, it's an elephant's cubit. So one gauges according to one's own measure.

People's bodies are about a fathom long. This body, along with the mind and perception, can be designated as the world⁴⁹. It is the origin of the world⁵⁰. It is said to be the cessation of the world⁵¹; and to be a way to the cessation of the world⁵².

In this body are found the Four Noble Truths. These are not to be searched from outside or in another body. Thus the Dhamma occurs in one's own body. There is a saying in Myanmar: While searching for the Truth, one finds it within oneself. In some

⁴⁸ *Imasmiṃ yeva byāmamatte kalevare.*

⁴⁹ *Lokaṃ ceva paññāpemi.*

⁵⁰ *Loka samodayaṇīca.*

⁵¹ *Loka nirodhiṇīca.*

⁵² *Loka nirodha gāminī paṭipadāca.*

commentaries, *Nibbāna* is referred to in relation to the mind-body aggregates⁵³. However, you should realise that *Nibbāna* is not something that comes into being conditionally. In its formation, then there is surely its cessation.

That *Nibbāna* is located in the body needs some explanation. Let us consider the Buddha's case. At 29 years of age the *Bodhisatta* renounced. At 35 under a bodhi tree in Bodhgaya, he attained *Arahattamagga* and *sabbaññutā* (omniscience) in becoming the Buddha. The *Arahattamagga citta* object was *Nibbāna*.

At this instant what is this *Nibbāna* called? It is *kilesa Nibbāna* where the mental defilements are extinguished. Together with them, the desire to continue in the round of rebirths was removed by this *magga citta*. Before they died out, where were the *kilesas* (defilements) extinguished? It happened within the Buddha's *nāma-rūpa* – not in the big bodhi tree, nor somewhere else in the surroundings. In the text it is called *kilesa parinibbāna*.

Although all the *kilesas* had ceased, left behind was the result called *upādānakkhandhā* (the aggregates produced by these defilements together with kamma). For this reason the Buddha's *Nibbāna* under the bodhi tree is called *sa-upādisesa Nibbāna*.

⁵³ *Nibbānaṃ pi khandha paṭipatta meva.*

Here “upādi” means the result produced by kamma and *kilesas*. “*Sesa*” is what is still “remaining”. So this type of enlightenment is with remainder.

Consider: on becoming an *Arahant*, *rāga* has ceased in that individual, as well as *dosa*, *moha* and all other *kilesas*. But the material body which is the consequence of kamma and *vipāka* is still there. Consciousness is still there. To experience the five kinds of sense-objects, aren’t the eyes, ears, nose, tongue and body still there? Of course they are there.

Since the eyes are still there, what is good or bad is still to be seen. Because the ears are still present, good as well as bad sounds are still to be heard. As the nose is still present, good and bad smells are to be detected. The tongue being there, good and bad tastes can still be known. The body being present, touch can still be felt.

In the Buddha’s *nāma-rūpa*, due to *vipāka* and *kriya cittas* (resultant and functional consciousness) being still present, sense objects are still to be experienced. Eye consciousness arises. So do ear consciousness, nose consciousness, and so on. In this way feeling still exists. The Buddha and *Arahants* have not become like tree trunks. What is good, they know as good. What is not good, they know as not good. It is not otherwise. It is not that they no longer distinguish the two.

The Buddha was living in *Indasāla* cave at one time⁵⁴ when *Pañcasikha deva* (a deity) arrived there, holding a harp. He approached the Buddha, close enough for Him to hear him sing and play on the harp. The song was in praise of the qualities of the Buddha, Dhamma and the Sangha. Other songs were about objects of sensual desire. Nowadays these would be called love songs. When he had finished, what did the Buddha say?

"Pañcasikha, your singing and melody harmonise well."

The Buddha knew and understood enjoyment. However, did he say: "Hey, play on some more. Also record them for me on MP3 so that I can listen now and then" ? No, He didn't. So, there is no more attachment. Regarding what was pleasant, he knew as pleasant. That is why books and essays have been written about "Buddhism and beauty": that the Buddha acknowledged and recognised beauty. On the other hand other books maintained otherwise: that the Buddha stressed only on *anicca-dukkha-anatta* and *asubha* (impermanence-unsatisfactoriness-non-self and loathsomeness). A few authors are biased enough to insist that Buddhism is always looking to the negative aspects. This is not so. If there is beauty,

⁵⁴ *In Sakkapañha Sutta.*

then it is beauty. If there is no beauty, then it is not beautiful. According to what is perceived, it is revealed. There is no deliberate intention to paint a bleak picture of things. In seeing impermanence in the human body, we then say that it is impermanent. Seeing its unattractiveness, we say that it is unattractive.

If you really think about it, the natural state of a person's body is not comely. Make-up and scent have to be applied. The body's natural odour is not sweet-smelling. What is non-natural has to be used to cover what is actual and real. Isn't that so? Everyday people conceal themselves this way. Otherwise how can *tarnakha*⁵⁵ and cosmetics be sold? People also use ornaments to conceal, to prettify what is not beautiful.

The Buddha Himself pointed out what was the original condition. For something good, He knew that good and pleasant sensation, which He expressed as good. For something unpleasant, He knew it to be unpleasant. But He had no *taṇhā* or clinging. *Dosa* or hatred also no longer arose. Why so? The Buddha thoroughly understood the conditions of external sense objects, unlike people who do not. These people deceive in applying make-up, artificial dyes and fragrance. This they think is what is real and right.

⁵⁵ Kind of tree whose bark and root are used to make a fragrant paste for cosmetic purposes.

The Buddha and the *Arahants* already knew *pariññāta* or how to distinguish the natural and genuine, having understood all about external dhammas. Not only that, those *ajjhata* or internal ones were already clear to them. As *lobha*, *dosa* and other *kilesas* no longer exist, the internal has been cleared – the outside too. For that reason what is good is seen as good. What is not good is seen as not good. Understanding and feeling are present without any defilement arising with it. Just try to consider how peaceful and calm it must be. With *lobha* or *dosa* presence, there is always burning heat. Instead, according to what is, feeling experiences it simply as it is.

At the time the Buddha was under the bodhi tree, when His knowledge ripened, *rāga*, *dosa* and *moha* came to an end. Only when these were finished that *Nibbāna* could arise as the object. His realisation then can be called *kilesa-nirodha* or *Nibbāna* with the cessation of *kilesas*. In this *sa-upādisesa Nibbāna*, the body still remains – the *nāma-rūpa* where the *kilesas* used to be. Though it can be said that *Nibbāna* occurred internally⁵⁶ within the form, don't get the idea that *Nibbāna* can remain somewhere in the belly for instance. You will take rather long to go looking for *Nibbāna* there.

⁵⁶ According to Ledi Sayadaw: *Nibbāna* is internal because of cessation of mental defilement; external because not included in five aggregates.

The second *Nibbāna*

Then after 45 years, the Buddha reached the age of 80. At that time the remainder of what kamma and *kilesas* had produced, that is, the *nāma-rūpa* came to a stop along with the cause and conditions for the next birth. *Kamma vipākas* also became extinct. All the *kamma*-born matter ceased. Only *utu* (heat)-born matter was left. *Anupādisesa Nibbāna* is what it is called.

Sa-upādisesa Nibbāna can be known within one's lifetime. It means that *taṇhā* which supports one's life has been cut off. As for *anupādisesa Nibbāna*, it is said to be complete with *samparāyika*⁵⁷ (death). The *vipāka-nāma khandha* ceases at this time along with kamma-born matter. Then what is called "life" comes to an end: that is, *kammabhava* or creative kamma and *upapātibhava* or rebirth all cease in this *Nibbāna*.

So there are two kinds of *Nibbāna* – *sa-upādisesa* and *anupādisesa* – given a difference in perspective and point of view.

How is *Nibbāna* Realised?

(*vipassanā* insight knowledge)

How to realise *Nibbāna*? What is the way or method to be enlightened? What should be done is to

⁵⁷ In *Itivuttaka Pāḷi*, the term is used: *ītarā pana samparāyikā*.

practise *samatha*, then switch to *vipassanā*. That is one route. It is necessary to switch to *vipassanā* after practising *samatha*. Another route is to directly practise *vipassanā* or insight meditation.⁵⁸

In the practice of tranquility meditation, you use the power of *samādhi* (concentration) from *samatha* practice. Using this power you contemplate the dhammas found in *jhānas* attained as *anicca-dukkha-anatta*. This is *vipassanā*. There comes a time when *visankhāra* occurs (the *sankhāra* objects cease). In other words, you realise *Nibbāna*. At that time relevant *kilesas* are removed by relevant *maggas*.

By way of *samatha*

To attain *jhāna*, you have to train your mind with an object. For instance, *Buddhānussati* (contemplation on the virtues of the Buddha) or in-and out-breath can be used. With enough practice the mind becomes steady and peaceful. *Samādhi* has been achieved. There could be *upacāra* (access) concentration as the mind draws near *jhāna*. Or there could be absorption. After emerging from *jhāna*, you contemplate on its dhammas or mental factors: *vitakka* (initial application), *vicāra*

⁵⁸ In *Yuganaddha Sutta* there are 4 routes:

1. *Samatha* preceded by *Vipassanā*,
2. *Vipassanā* preceded by *Samatha*,
3. The joined practice of *Samatha* and *Vipassanā*,
4. Removing *Vipassanupakkilesa*.

(sustained application), *pīti* (joy), *sukha* (happiness) and *ekaggatā* (one-pointedness).

By way of *vipassanā*

Their individual or natural characteristics should be realised. To contemplate dhammas is to try to see their *sabhāva lakkhaṇa* (individual or natural characteristics). For example what is the nature of *paṭhavi* (earth element)? Softness, hardness, or solidity:⁵⁹ these show the earth element's nature. *Tejo* (heat element) is what is hot or cold while *vāyoś* (wind element's) nature is to move or push. As for *āpo* (water element), its nature is to bind or flow. On examining the *sabhāva lakkhaṇas*, you will get to know the respective dhammas of *sankhāras*. For example, when you look at the mind, you learn that "*Vitakka* brings the *citta* to the object. That is its characteristic." On the other hand *vicāra* fixes the mind onto the object given its nature. These *sabhāva lakkhaṇas* should be focused on. Only by doing so will the Dhamma be seen. This is finding out what is reality.

In your own *nāma-rūpa* where dhammas are taking place, try to reflect on their cause and conditions. Let's say, in noting eye consciousness that arises in the eye-door process⁶⁰, you realise that it is because of its object which meets with *cakkhu pasāda* (sensitive eye) that consciousness comes to exist.

⁵⁹ *Thaddha lakkhaṇa*.

⁶⁰ *Cakkhu-dvāra-vīthi*.

In this way you come to know the respective conditions.

To make this point more obvious, take the noting of the out- and in-breath in *ānāpāna*, using the *vipassanā* method. Focus on the breath as the primary object. Try to observe the two processes: the air being inhaled and then being exhaled. Where do they touch? It is at the tip of the nostril when you inhale and similarly when you exhale. If you observe closely at the time of contact, you will find that the air is one thing, the air touching the place is another. Knowing that there is touching is another thing. How many things are there? Three things have happened. At the very least, there are three things to be distinguished which are different.

This knowing is unlike your earlier awareness of breathing in the past. Then, you would say that breathing was in one whole "piece". Now you are aware of the process part by part. Even in observing these *sankhāras*, you become aware of the air's nature – its characteristic of movement. As it touches the *kāya pasāda* (sensitive body) at the tip of the nostril, you become aware of this movement which is the *phoṭṭhabba* (tangible) object's nature and the "accepting" nature of the sensitive body. This is what you then realise: because of these two coming in touch, the knowing mind arises.

When you come to see all these three factors, then

you realise: "Oh, *vāyo* element is only *vāyo-phoṭṭhabba* object." When this air as tangible object comes into contact with the tip of the nostril which is the sensitive body (*kāya pasāda*), the awareness of this touch comes into being. This knowing mind is the effect. The *vāyo-phoṭṭhabba* (air as tangible) object and *kāya pasāda* (sensitive body) are the conditions. This way you come to know cause-and-effect.

The air element is matter. Its contact at the tip of the nostril is matter. As these two join together, awareness which comes into being as a result is mind. In distinguishing the two factors, you have already differentiated body and mind. In the past what you would have said was an "I" is no longer so now. The air being noted, the tip of the nostril, together with your name made up the identity you called "I". Now that "I" is no longer mentioned. It is just a matter of *sabhāva lakkhaṇas* (natural characteristics). You have seen your own natural characteristics. At this time you also see their respective cause and conditions.

This explains the method of seeing in brief. What has been mentioned is *nāma-rūpa pariccheda ñāṇa*. Mind and matter: you can distinctly tell them apart. In what way is it called "matter"? In what way is it called "mind"? The air which touches your tip of the nostril does not know. The tip of the nostril also does not know that the air is touching it. Your mind

knows. So from here, what is not able to know is matter. What knows is mind.

Having realised this knowledge of *nāma-rūpa pariccheda ñāṇa* and *paccaya pariggaha ñāṇa* (knowledge of causation of mind and matter), your doubts are removed⁶¹. Doubts such as "Will I be?" or "Will I not be?" will no longer occur. Why so? Because of *this*, *that* comes into being. This coming into being you have already realised. You have already seen that when air touches the tip of the nostril, the mind which knows this contact arises. For this reason, there is no longer any need for questions like "Will I be?" or "Will I no longer be?" Isn't it right that awareness of touch occurs when air touches your nostril? Because *this* exists, *that* happens – that is to say, because of this condition, there is its effect. Realising in this way is *paccaya pariggaha* insight.

From here you climb to a higher stage as your knowledge is sharpened: when you can see impermanence. For instance, at the instance of contact, there is the knowing of it. After that moment, the knowing disappears. Again, at the next instant contact arises. With it an instance of knowing occurs again. Having arisen, it vanishes. For the out-breath, once there is contact, you are aware of it. Then that awareness ceases. For the

⁶¹ *Kaṅkhāvitaraṇa visuddhi*.

in-breath, once it touches the tip of the nostril, you know it. Then it ceases. You realise that in pairs – the contact and the awareness – they arise and vanish. With this realisation you see the impermanent nature (*anicca*). As knowledge together with power of concentration and *sati* (mindfulness) continue to work, *udayabbaya ñāṇa* (insight of rise and fall) will occur. You will also come to see other *sankhāras* in this way.

You continue to note arising and falling till a point when you find that you cannot see the arising anymore. You come to see only *bhaṅga* (knowledge of dissolution). You wonder why, seeing this phenomenon as fearful: without a break and at a rush, these *sankhāras* keep on vanishing. The consciousness with these *sankhāras* as object also disappear too. It is the *vipassanā* mind that sees the object and the consciousness that takes the object passing away in pair. Thus you become frightened, you want to be rid of these phenomena.

You start to search for way to be free of them. While looking for an exit, you realise, "Oh, previously I was so fond of these *sankhāras*."

By surpassing the "love and hate" and likes and dislikes of *sankhāras*, a knowledge called *saṅkhārupekkhā* (knowledge of equanimity towards conditioned things) is finally attained which enables you to wholly contemplate your *sabhāvas* (natural

characteristics). At its matured stage, you are no longer frightened or angered about anything. You no longer think something can be delightful and pleasing. In seeing somebody's nature as such and such, you also accept it as such. As this insight stage matures, you can see the appearing-disappearing of *sankhāra* objects with ease and with little effort. There comes a time when your knowledge becomes very matured till a point where there is cessation in *sankhāras*, this cessation is *asankhata* (the unconditioned) – that is *Nibbāna*.

What has happened is that it is at the last instant of *sankhārupekkhā* insight becoming fully ripened: this is the last *vipassanā* knowledge. What comes next is the preliminary (*parikamma*) consciousness which prepares for the arising of *magga citta* and which sets things in order. Only then access (*upacāra*) mind occurs which brings *magga citta* in proximity. Afterwards *anuloma* arises which is knowledge of conformity.

These three types of knowledge still have *sankhāra* objects or *nimittas* (signs of *sankhāra* i.e. *anicca-dukkha-anatta*)

Then *gotrabhū* (change of lineage) mind arises which cuts your worldly person's lineage, replacing it with an *ariya's* (enlightened being's) lineage. At this moment the *sankhāra* object is released. With its disappearance, another object, *Nibbāna*, comes

to be seen. *Gotrabhū* takes *Nibbāna* as its object.⁶² This actual seeing of *Nibbāna* is with *magga citta*. It is as though you have crossed to the other bank of a river. As *magga* consciousness appears, it takes *Nibbāna* as its object.

Visuddhimagga gives an example of a stream to show what happens. A person on one side of it wants to jump over to the other side. On his side is a tree. He ties a rope to a branch. Then hanging on to the rope as a support, he swings himself across to the other bank. Once he crosses over the stream, does he still hold on to the rope? If he keeps holding on, he will be swung back to his side of the stream.

By letting go of the rope, in the same way the mind does not cling to the *sankhāra* objects any longer and let go. It holds on to a non-*sankhāra* object, which can only be *Nibbāna*. If the mind continues to hold on the *sankhāra* object, then it will be as usual that way. It is like the person who continues to remain on this side of the stream. The *sankhāra* object has to be given up. This is because when the object comes to an end, a *sankhāra*-free object – that is, an object in which *sankhāras* have been extinguished – is sighted as *Sotāpattimagga citta* arises. At the same time all *vicikicchā* (doubts) and

⁶² *Gotrabhū* acts as *avjjana* or mind is attending to *Nibbāna*. It has no *dassana* or seeing, thus it does not eradicate *kilesa*.

diṭṭhi (wrong view) are got rid of. The remaining *kilesas* become weakened.

If *vipassanā* knowledge increases, it can reach a stage when *Sakadāgāmi magga* arises. This practice is much like a course of physical or mental training: each stage brings about an improvement in quality. Again by further practice knowledge continues to increase, until a point when *Anāgāmi magga* appears. This is when *kāmarāga* (sensual desire) and *byāpāda* (hatred) are removed. Then if you strive on, there will be for the fourth time when *vipassanā* insight escalates to its highest level. This is when *Arahattamagga* consciousness comes in sight. All *kilesas* are extinguished then. What this means is that within the four *maggas*, the *kilesas* are progressively removed.

As soon as the person lands on the other side of the stream, will he come to a standstill immediately? Having leaped from the other bank, he would surely stagger on reaching the ground. Keeping his balance: this stands for *phala citta* (fruition consciousness) emerging. In this way *Nibbāna* establishes itself when he has crossed over the stream.

Then would he ask, "How did I cross over?" Would he not know? This is like a newly enlightened *Sotāpanna* asking: "How did I reach this side?" Of course he knows. Having crossed over means that

he knows. Similarly for the other higher *ariyas* (enlightened beings), on their own they know for themselves.

So this is how *Nibbāna* is to be realised as written in the text, according to the Buddha in His discourses. This is also said by individuals who have done so and reached their destination.

To find out, you have to follow the way that I have spoken about and practise by yourself.

Being liberated

The Buddha taught the way⁶³: after *jhāna* has been attained, to cross over to *vipassanā*. Striving in the practice of *samatha*, one attains first *jhāna*. Having emerged from the *jhāna*, one contemplates on its constituents or *jhānic* factors like *vitakka* (initial application), *vicāra* (sustained application) and so on as *anicca-dukkha-anatta*. Doing so, one sees their impermanent, unsatisfactory and non-self-nature. In the end gaining a powerful momentum, one gains the perpetual peace of *Nibbāna*. At this instant the characteristic of impermanence is no longer seen, having been given up. It is as though one lets go of the cord which one has been holding on to up till now.

In the same way the *sankhāra* object has been

⁶³ In *Aṅguttara Pāḷi*.

released. Seeing its characteristics of *anicca-dukkha-anatta* has been given up, only then can *Nibbāna* as object be sighted. This is how *Nibbāna* is to be realised. There is no other way it can be done: only with *magga* and *phala* knowledge. If you wish ardently to find *Nibbānic* bliss, this is the way to follow.

In *Arahatta magga* and *phala*, all *kilesas* along with their attendant worries and anxieties are no more. As mental defilements are gone, there is no more cause of worry. The inside has been cleared up. Outside phenomena are seen clearly and dispassionately. Because the inside has been cleaned up, the heat of *lobha-dosa-moha* (greed-hatred-delusion) no longer occurs. It is perpetual peace and calm. In any chance meeting with the *lokadhammas* (*worldly* conditions), there is no more fright and fear.

*Phuṭṭassa lokadhammehi,
Cittam yassa na kampati."*

Internally the mind has no agitation any more. For what reason does a mind shake? It is due to *lobha*, *dosa* and *moha*.

Asokam virajam khemam,
Etam maṅgala-muttamam.

With their absence, there is *asoka* (sorrowless).

Worry and anxiety no longer exist. "*Virajā*" or mental taints are gone. The mind is truly secured at peace, *khema*. What the last line means to say is that only this is a real blessing indeed. Then, comes the last blessing:

*Nibbāna-sacchikiriya ca,
Etaṃ maṅgala-muttamaṃ.*

It is realisation of *Nibbāna*. By doing so, the heat of *kilesas* will be cooled so that the person is always tranquil in peace and happiness. This is unlike the kind of happiness obtained in enjoying objects of sensual pleasure. This kind of happiness contains no sensuality. So when *anupādisesa Nibbāna* occurs as mentioned earlier, the mind-body aggregates no longer exist, all being extinguished. In *Nibbānic* bliss, because feeling is no longer present, that itself is happiness.

On one occasion Venerable *Sāriputta* said in a discourse, "Monks of mine, *Nibbāna* is great happiness, *Nibbāna* is great happiness."

At that time, Venerable *Udāyī* said, "Venerable Sir, in *Nibbāna* there is no *vedanā* (feeling), isn't it so? How is there happiness then?" He only knew that the experience of happiness associated with *vedanā* (feeling) which he felt.

So Venerable *Sāriputta* replied," Indeed, being

without *vedanā* is happiness itself." Happiness is really to be without *vedanā*.

Because of this, all of you listeners – who cherish the Dhamma and have now an idea about *Nibbāna's* attributes – should acquire *anubodha* (knowledge from the text). Then you should try to go on to acquire *paṭivedha* (penetrative insight based on your own practice). May each one of you strive to do so.

Sādhu ! Sādhu ! Sādhu !

SALLEKHA SUTTA

How to eradicate one's bad manners?

Introduction

This *sutta* named ***Sallekha*** is profound like an ocean. In this *sutta* 44 points are explained in 5 sections.

Thus I have heard. Once upon a time the Buddha dwelt at *Jetavana* near *Sāvatthī*. Then Venerable *Maha Cunda* withdrew from his meditation and went to the Buddha. Paying homage to the Buddha he asked this question:

"Venerable Sir, there arise the various views relating to *Atta* (self) and *Loka* (world). Could those views be eradicated just at the beginning of contemplation?"

The Buddha answered:

"There arise, remain and active are the various views relating to *Atta* (self) and *Loka* (world) towards the five aggregates. By seeing things as they really are those five aggregates as 'this is not mine, this is I am not, this is not my soul', and the various views could be eradicated."

Living with Happiness

The Buddha continued the expounding of Dhamma: "*Cunda*, in this teaching a *Bhikkhu* attains the first *Jhāna* with thought⁶⁴ and consideration⁶⁵, and joy and happiness born of seclusion⁶⁶ having abandoned sensual pleasure and unwholesome states. It is possible that he might think thus: 'I live in a life with self-effacing bad manners.' Actually it is not self-effacing bad manners in this teaching. It is only a way of life with happiness.

Cunda, in this teaching a *Bhikkhu* attains the second *Jhāna* with inner purification⁶⁷ and developed concentration, and joy and happiness born of concentration⁶⁸ due to disassociation from thought and consideration owing to having removed them. It is possible that he might think thus: 'I live in a life with self-effacing bad manners.' Actually it is not self-effacing bad manners in this teaching. It is only a way of life with happiness.

Then *Cunda*, in this teaching a *Bhikkhu* attains the third *Jhāna* and dwells in equanimity⁶⁹ due to

⁶⁴ Leading or directing the mind onto the object.

⁶⁵ Sustaining the mind onto the object.

⁶⁶ In the first *Jhāna* attainment joy and happiness born of seclusion.

⁶⁷ Inner purification refers to faith which makes the mind pure.

⁶⁸ In the second *Jhāna* joy and happiness born of concentration, therefore the concentration is stronger than the first *Jhāna*'s born of seclusion.

⁶⁹ Before the third *Jhāna* attainment, the *bhikkhu* increases his concentration by finding fault in joy (*pīti*), but has neutral feeling

detachment from joy but neutral feeling towards happiness. He enjoys with mindfulness, full awareness and comprehension. Owing to that *Jhāna*, noble persons praise that "he is so quiet, so mindful, so happy". He attains such third *Jhāna*. It is possible that he might think thus: 'I live in a life with self-effacing bad manners.' Actually it is not self-effacing bad manners in this teaching. It is only a way of life with happiness.

Then *Cunda*, in this teaching a *Bhikkhu* attains the fourth *Jhāna* with the feeling of neither pain nor pleasure, and mindfulness purified by equanimity having removed pleasure and pain, with ceased happiness and unhappiness at the earlier stages⁷⁰. It is possible that he might think thus: 'I live in a life with self-effacing bad manners.' Actually it is not self-effacing bad manners in this teaching. It is only a way of life with happiness."

towards *sukha* or happiness (which has no excitement). Which states control excitement? They are mindfulness and knowledge in equanimity attainment.

⁷⁰ The Commentaries explain that: bodily pain (*dukkha*) is removed at the access/neighbourhood moment before first *Jhāna* attainment; displeasure (*domanassa*) is removed at the access/neighbourhood moment before second *Jhāna* attainment; joy (*pīti*) is removed at the access/neighbourhood moment before third *Jhāna* attainment; pleasure (*somanassa*) and bodily and mental happiness (*sukha*) are removed at the access/neighbourhood moment before fourth *Jhāna* attainment.

Living with Peace

A *Bhikkhu* in this teaching by having passed over the entire *Rūpa Jhāna* (material absorptions) perception ceased the perception of sensory impact⁷¹ and paid no attention to the remaining diversity objects⁷² attains the *Jhāna* of *Ākāśānañcāyatana* by meditating thus "the space is infinite". It is possible that he might think thus: 'I live in a life with self-effacing bad manners.' Actually it is not self-effacing bad manners in this teaching. It is only a way of life in peace.

A *Bhikkhu* in this teaching, having passed over the entire *Jhāna* of *Ākāśānañcāyatana*, attains the *Jhāna* of *Viññāṇaṇcāyatana* meditating thus "this consciousness is infinite"⁷³. It is possible that he might think thus: 'I live in a life with self-effacing bad manners.' Actually it is not self-effacing bad manners in this teaching. It is only a way of life in

⁷¹ Sensory impact is due to the meeting of sensitivity base and object, e.g. eye base with visible object, eye consciousness arises. Here there is no more eye, ear, nose, tongue and body consciousness. In *Arūpa* (immaterial) *Jhāna* attainment, the *bhikkhu* sees nothing, hears nothing,...etc.

⁷² In *Jhāna* attainment, he notices nothing other than attainment consciousness, (no unwholesome, wholesome, resultant, functional consciousness in sense sphere and *Rūpa* (material) *Jhāna* sphere).

⁷³ The object of second *Arūpa Jhāna* is the first *Arūpa Jhāna* consciousness. In the first *Arūpa Jhāna* the object is infinite space, and the subject is awareness of infinite space. In the second *Arūpa Jhāna*, the subject of *Arūpa Jhāna* is 'shift' to be the object of the second *Arūpa Jhāna*.

peace.

A *Bhikkhu* in this teaching, having passed over the entire *Jhāna* of *Viññāṇañcāyatana* attains the *Jhāna* of *Ākincaṇṇāyatana* meditating thus "this consciousness remains nothingness"⁷⁴. It is possible that he might think thus: 'I live in a life with self-effacing bad manners.' Actually it is not self-effacing bad manners in this teaching. It is only a way of life in peace.

A *Bhikkhu* in this teaching, having passed over the entire *Jhāna* of *Ākincaṇṇāyatana* attains the *Jhāna* of *Nevaśaṇṇā-nāsaṇṇāyatana* meditating thus "neither perception nor non-perception." It is possible that he might think thus: 'I live in a life with self-effacing bad manners.' Actually it is not self-effacing bad manners in this teaching. It is only a way of life in peace."

I. Way of self-effacing

"*Cunda* you should do the practice of self-effacing bad manners:

1. The others may be cruel but we must not be cruel.
2. The others may deprive one of his life but we must not deprive one of his life.

⁷⁴ The object of third *Arūpa Jhāna* has "non-existence of the first *Arūpa Jhāna* consciousness (*viññāṇa*)" as its object.

3. The others may deprive one of his properties but we must not deprive one of his properties.
4. The others may not live a life of celibacy but we must live a life of celibacy.
5. The others may tell lies but we must not tell lies.
6. The others may speak maliciously but we must not speak maliciously.
7. The others may speak harshly but we must not speak harshly.
8. The others may have destructive talk but we must not have destructive talk.
9. The others may be having a desire for making the properties belonging to others be their own but we must not have desire for making properties belonging to others be our own.
10. The others may take delight in someone's suffering but we must not take delight in someone's suffering.
11. The others may have wrong views but we must have right views.
12. The others may have wrong thoughts but we must have right thoughts.
13. The others may have wrong speech but we must have right speech.
14. The others may have wrong actions but we must have right actions.
15. The others may have wrong livelihood but we must have right livelihood.
16. The others may have wrong effort but we must have right effort.
17. The others may have wrong mindfulness but we

- must have right mindfulness.
18. The others may have wrong concentration but we must have right concentration.
 19. The others may have evil knowledge but we must have good knowledge.
 20. The others may have wrong liberation but we must have right liberation.
 21. The others may have the influence of sloth and torpor but we must not have sloth and torpor at all.
 22. The others may have mental restlessness but we must not have mental restlessness.
 23. The others may dither over the truth but we must pass over the dither.
 24. The others may be angry but we must not be angry.
 25. The others may want to take revenge but we must not take revenge.
 26. The others may be ungrateful but we must be grateful.
 27. The others may have egoism⁷⁵ but we must not have egoism.
 28. The others may have jealousy but we must not have jealousy.
 29. The others may have stinginess⁷⁶ but we must not have stinginess.
 30. The others may be fraudulent⁷⁷ but we must not be fraudulent.

⁷⁵ thinking they have equal knowledge, traits...etc

⁷⁶ followed by anger

⁷⁷ showing a quality which they do not have

31. The others may be deceitful⁷⁸ but we must not be deceitful.
32. The others may have mental hardness⁷⁹ but we must not have mental hardness.
33. The others may be arrogant but we must not be arrogant.
34. The others may be difficult to advice but we must be easy to receive advice.
35. The others may have bad friends but we must have good friends,
36. The others may be negligent but we must be diligent.
37. The others may be faithless but we must be faithful.
38. The others may be moral shameless but we must be moral shameful.
39. The others may not have moral fear but we must have moral fear.
40. The others may have little knowledge but we must have much knowledge.
41. The others may be lazy but we must be energetic.
42. The others may be unmindful but we must be with mindfulness.
43. The others may lack wisdom but we must possess wisdom.
44. The others may adhere to their own views firmly held difficult to relinquish but we must not adhere to our own views firmly held easy to

⁷⁸ hiding their own faults or offences

⁷⁹ due to anger and conceit

relinquish."

II. Way of intention

"*Cunda* it is great benefit, I say, even intention towards wholesome state needless to say in performance of physical and verbal functions. Therefore, you should intend doing thus: the others may be cruel but we must not be cruel,.....etc.

III. Way of avoidance

"*Cunda* suppose the path is uneven but another path is even by which one can avoid the uneven path. And suppose the ford is uneven but another ford is even by which one can avoid the uneven ford.

So too there is a person who is cruel. For him non-cruelty is another way by which he can avoid the cruelty.

Then there is a person who deprives living beings of their lives. For him the abstinence from killing is another way by which he can avoid killing.

Then there is a person who deprives others of their properties. For him the abstinence from stealing is another way by which he can avoid stealing.

Then there is a person who has sex. For him celibacy is another way by which he can avoid having sex.

Then there is a person who tells lies. For him telling the truth is another way by which he can avoid lying.

Then there is a person who speaks maliciously. For him the abstaining from malicious speech is another way by which he can avoid it.

Then there is a person who speaks harshly. For him abstaining from harsh speech is another way by which he can avoid it.

Then there is a person who has destructive speech. For him the abstaining from destructive speech is another way by which he can avoid it.

Then there is a person who has a desire for making properties belonging to others his own by which he can avoid it. For him there is another way, the abstaining from desire for making properties belonging to others his own by which he can avoid it.

Then there is a person who takes delight in someone's suffering. For him there is another way, abstaining from taking delight in someone's suffering by which he can avoid it.

Then there is a person who has wrong views. For him there is another way, the right view by which he

can avoid it.

Then there is a person who has wrong thoughts. For him there is another way, the right thought by which he can avoid it.

Then there is a person who has wrong speech. For him there is another way, the right thought by which he can avoid it.

Then there is a person who has wrong action. For him there is another way, the right action by which he can avoid it.

Then there is a person who has wrong livelihood. For him there is another way, the right livelihood by which he can avoid it.

Then there is a person who has wrong effort. For him there is another way, the right effort by which he can avoid it.

Then there is a person who has wrong mindfulness. For him there is another way, right mindfulness by which he can avoid it.

Then there is a person who has wrong concentration. For him there is another way, right concentration by which he can avoid it.

Then there is a person who has evil knowledge. For

him there is another way, good knowledge by which he can avoid it.

Then there is a person who has wrong liberation. For him there is another way, right liberation by which he can avoid it.

Then there is a person who is influenced by sloth and torpor. For him there is another way, free from sloth and torpor by which he can avoid it.

Then there is a person who has mental restlessness. For him there is another way, free from mental restlessness by which he can avoid it.

Then there is a person who dithers over the truth. For him there is another way, of passing over the dither by which he can avoid it.

Then there is a person who has anger. For him there is another way, abstaining from anger by which he can avoid it.

Then there is a person who has revenge. For him there is another way, non-revenge by which he can avoid it.

Then there is a person who is ungrateful. For him there is another way, gratefulness by which he can avoid it.

Then there is a person who has egoism. For him there is another way, non-egoism by which he can

avoid it.

Then there is a person who has jealousy. For him there is another way, non-jealousy by which he can avoid it.

Then there is a person who has stinginess. For him there is another way, non-stinginess by which he can avoid it.

Then there is a person who has fraudulence. For him there is another way, non-fraudulence by which he can avoid it.

Then there is a person who is deceitful. For him there is another way, being non-deceitful by which he can avoid it.

Then there is a person who has obstinacy. For him there is another way, non-obstinacy by which he can avoid it.

Then there is a person who has arrogance .For him there is another way, non-arrogance by which he can avoid it.

Then there is a person who has difficulty to be advised. For him there is another way, easy-to-be-advised way by which he can avoid it.

Then there is a person who has bad friends. For him

there is another way, having good friends by which he can avoid it.

Then there is a person who has negligence. For him there is another way, diligence by which he can avoid it.

Then there is a person who has faithlessness. For him there is another way, faithfulness by which he can avoid it.

Then there is a person who has moral shamelessness. For him there is another way, moral shamefulness by which he can avoid it.

Then there is a person who has moral fearlessness. For him there is another way, moral fearfulness by which he can avoid it.

Then there is a person who has little knowledge. For him there is another way, much knowledge by which he can avoid it.

Then there is a person who has laziness. For him there is another way, energy by which he can avoid it.

Then there is a person who has unmindfulness. For him there is another way, mindfulness by which he can avoid it.

Then there is a person who has ignorance. For him there is another way, wisdom by which he can avoid it.

Then there is a person who has wrong views firmly held, difficult to relinquish. For him there is another way, the absence of wrong view firmly held, difficult to relinquish by which he can avoid it.

IV. The way leading upwards

"Suppose *Cunda* there are any unwholesome states they all lead downwards. There are any wholesome states they all lead upwards. Even so, there is a person who has cruelty. For him there is another way, non-cruelty that leads to him upwards and.....etc.

V. The way of extinguishing

"*Cunda* it is impossible that one who is himself sinking in the mud able to pull out another who is sinking in the mud. But it is possible that one who is not himself sinking in the mud able to pull out another who is sinking in the mud.

Another way it is impossible that one who is himself untamed, undisciplined and unextinguished be able to tame another, discipline him, and help extinguish. But it is possible that one who is himself tamed, disciplined and extinguished be able to tame another, discipline and help extinguish. So too: a person who has cruelty for him there is non-cruelty by which to

extinguish it and.....etc.”

Conclusion

“So *Cunda*, I have taught the way of effacement. I have taught the way of intention. I have taught the way of avoidance. I have taught the way leading upwards. I have taught the way of extinguishing to you. What should be done for His disciples out of compassion by a Teacher who seeks their welfare, that I have done for you. *Cunda* there are places under a tree, there are empty huts, do meditate, do not be heedless. Lest you may worry about it later; don’t let it be so. This is my instruction to you.”

The Buddha gave this *sutta*. Venerable *Maha Cunda* was satisfied, he accepted the Buddha’s words.

Sādhu ! Sādhu ! Sādhu !

Sabbadānaṃ dhammadānaṃ jināti

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*May all the departed relatives, teachers and friends
rejoice in the merit of this Dhamma-dana
May they be well, happy and peaceful.*

*May all the loved ones, all beings, too,
share in the merits gained,
Enjoy good health, prosperity and happiness,
Cultivate loving-kindness and wisdom,
Culminating in the cessation of all suffering.*



Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!

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Suggested websites for Pali Scripture Studies.

Access to Insight

<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/>

The Buddhist Society Western Australia

<http://www.bswa.org/>

Ancient Buddhist Text

<http://www.ancient-buddhist-texts.net/>

Bodhi Monastery

<http://www.bodhimonastery.net>

The Dharmafarer Website

<http://dharmafarer.googlepages.com/>

Sutta Readings

<http://www.suttareadings.net/>

eTipitaka Quotation

<http://studies.worldtipitaka.org/>

Sutta Central

<http://www.suttacentral.net/>

Wikipitaka – The Completing Tipitaka

http://tipitaka.wikia.com/wiki/Main_Page

Chattha Sangayana - VRI

<http://www.tipitaka.org/index.shtml>

Bhavana Society

<http://www.bhavanasociety.org/>



Venerable Sayādaw Dr Nandamālābhivamsa
Aggamahāganthavācakaṇḍita Aggamahāṇḍita

"Discriminating Good From Evil" We should not count on the Buddha to remove the defilements from us. Like a doctor He can only give a prescription: "Practise this way to remove greed-hatred-delusion (*lobha-dosa-moha*)."
The doctor cannot do anything if we do not take the medicine prescribed....

"Realising Nibbāna" "The attachment one has for oneself cannot be matched by any other." The most beloved in the world is oneself. It is through one's self-love that one loves one's children and property. You may think it is love for another.....

"Sallekha Sutta"..... By seeing things as they really are those five aggregates as 'this is not mine, this is I am not, this is not my soul', and the various views could be eradicated." ...